Building a Nation

A history of Botswana from 1800 to 1910

Revised Edition

J. Ramsay, B. Morton, T. Mgadla

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Time line

Botswana history

500,000 years ago:	Early Stone Age tools in Botswana.
25,000 BCE:	Late Stone Age in Botswana. Rock paintings in the region.
By 200 BCE:	Pastoralism in Botswana.
By 200:	Bantu speakers in southern Africa.
By 350:	Iron Age in Botswana. Spread of arable agriculture.
By 700:	Emergence of larger, semi-permanent settlements, Botswana region integrated into coastal trading networks.
1100:	Late Iron Age in eastern Botswana.
1300-1500:	Evidence of depopulation, possible dry phase.
c. 1450:	Bakalanga Kingdom of Butwa emerges.
1690s:	Bakalanga Kingdom under Nichasike defeats Portuguese.
By 1800:	Bakgalagadi, Bakalanga, Batswana, Wayeyi, Babirwa, Bapedi, Hambukushu and Bekuhane settled in Botswana.
1801:	Truter-Somerville expedition, First official British contact with Batswana.
1816:	LMS missionaries begin work among Batswana.
1821:	Execution of Bakwena *Kgosi* Motswasele II.
1822:	Robert Moffat visits *Kgosi* Makaba II of the Bangwaketse, first missionary in Botswana.
1823:	The Bakololo of Sebetwane begin their two decade invasion through eastern, central and north western

BCE stands for Before Common Era, i.e. same as Before Christ.

Botswana leading to the temporary breakup of many *merafe*.

1825: Bangwaketse, Bakwena and Bakgatla ba-ga-Mmanaana defeated by Bakololo, Makaba II killed.

1826: Battle of Dithubaruba. Bangwaketse defeat Bakololo with help of armed Cape traders. Bakololo subsequently move into northern Botswana.

c. 1826-1828: Battle of Matopos. *Kgosi* Kgari of Bangwato defeated and killed by Bakalanga.

1831: Amandebele move into western Transvaal.

1832: Defeat Barolong at Khunwana.

1833: Sechele becomes *kgosi* of Bakwena.

c. 1834: Sebego defeats Amandebele at Dutlwe, subsequently invades western Kgalagadi.

1834-54: "Great Trek" Boers invade South African highveld, seizing land from Batswana and other Africans.

1835: Sekgoma I becomes *kgosi* of Bangwato.

1836: Barolong *Kgosi* Moroka rescues Boers at Vegkop following an Amandebele attack. Temporary Boer-Batswana alliance formed.

1837: Batswana, Boers and Griqua drive the Amandebele out of the Transvaal. Amandebele subsequently invade Zimbabwe via Botswana.

1840: Amandebele join Amangoni in conquering the Bakalanga kingdom.

1841: Beginning of David Livingstone's career among the Batswana.

1842: Last Amandebele raid into south eastern Botswana.

1842: Bangwato under *Kgosi* Sekgoma drive Amandebele away from Shoshong.

1843: Sechele builds fort at Tshonwane, prepares to fight Boers.

1847: Livingstone's mission at Kolobeng founded, first church and school in Botswana. Letsholathebe becomes *kgosi* of the Batswana.

1848: Bakaa driven out of Shoshong hills by Bangwato, flee to Kweneng.

1849: Europeans begin travelling to Ngamiland.

1852: The Batswana-Boer war begins. Bakgatla ba-ga-Mmanaana flee to Botswana to escape Boers. Pan-Batswana alliance led by Sechele resists Boer invasion at Dimawe. Batswana raid the western Transvaal.

1853: Batswana drive Boers back to Rustenburg and Potchefstroom. Sechele agrees to a ceasefire after Boers ask for peace. Balete, Batlokwa, Bahurutshe migrate to south eastern Botswana.

1854: Battle of Kgwebe, Batawana defeat the Bakololo.

1857: Peace agreement between Sechele and South African Republic President Martinus Pretorius. Arrival of Lutheran missionaries in Botswana. Gaseitsiwe defeats Senthufe to become undisputed *kgosi* of the Bangwaketse.

1857: Sechele installs Matsheng as Bangwato *kgosi* in place of Sekgoma.

1858: Sechele reinstalls Sekgoma as *kgosi* of Bangwato in place of Matsheng. Nharo-Khoe in Ghanzi defeated by Batawana.

1863: Amandebele attack on Shoshong defeated by Bangwato. *Merafe* in south eastern Botswana spread out from Dithubaruba to found new settlements.

1865: Gaseitsiwe, Montshiwa, and Sechele threaten to go to war if Transvaal Boers seize Lehurutshe. The Boers back down.

1865-66: Bangwato Civil War between Sekgoma and his son Khama. Sechele reinstalls Matsheng.

1867: German explorer Karl Mauch finds gold in the North eastern district.

1869: Paul Kruger flogs Bakgatla ba-ga-Kgafela *Kgosi* Kgamanyane. Ba-ga-Kgafela then move from the western Transvaal to settle at Mochudi.

1871: British annex Batlhaping lands around Kimberley as Griqualand West. Ludorf draws up constitution for united Bangwaketse, Bakwena, Barolong, and Batlhaping confederation.

1872: Sechele installs Khama as *kgosi* of Bangwato in place of Matsheng.

1873: Sekgoma installed once more as Bangwato *kgosi* in place of Khama.

1875: Inter-merafe conflicts break out throughout southern Botswana. Bakgatla ba-ga-Kgafela defeat Bakwena at Mochudi. Khama ousts Sekgoma in Gammangwato, remains in power until his death in 1923.

1876: Bakwena defeat Ba-ga- Kgafela, Balete, and Batlokwa at Molepolole. Breechloading rifles introduced. British occupy the Transvaal. Balozi destroy Bekuhane (Basubiya) state.

1878-79: First Anglo-Batlhaping War. British forces under Warren occupy Batswana lands south of the Molopo.

1881: British withdrawal from the Transvaal and southern Batswana lands. Balete defeat Bangwaketse at Ramotswa. Inter-merafe wars in southern Botswana end.

1883: Bakwena, Bangwaketse, and Barolong renew attempt to form a confederation to counter growing British and Boer threats.

1884: British re-occupy Batswana lands south of the Molopo. Battle of Khutiyabasadi, Batawana defeat Amandebele.

1885: The British unilaterally proclaim the Bechuanaland Protectorate to counter Germany's occupation of Namibia.

1886: British land commission awards 92% of Batlhaping and Barolong lands south of the Molopo to whites.

1887: Battle of Ngwapa. Bangwato defeat Baseleka with British support.

1888: Rudd Concession becomes basis of British South Africa Co. claims to Zimbabwe.

1889: Most Batswana *dikgosi* object to colonial rule at the Kopong Conference. The British South Africa Company (BSAC) is awarded a royal charter to administer Botswana and Central Africa in the name of the British Crown. Khama moves capital from Shoshong to Palapye.

1890: Overriding local objections, the British grant themselves the right to exercise colonial control over Botswana through the Foreign Jurisdictions Act. Protectorate extended to Ngamiland and Chobe. BSAC Pioneer Column passes through Botswana en route to Zimbabwe.

1891: Order-in-Council gives the High Commissioner wide ranging administrative powers. Sekgoma Letsholathebe becomes *kgosi* of Batawana.

1892: Tati (north eastern district) joined to the Protectorate. Sechele dies.

1893: Bechuanaland Border Police and Bangwato help the BSAC destroy the Amandebele Kingdom in Zimbabwe. Concessions Commission meets.

1894: Bangwato rule extended into Bukalanga region.

1895: Bathoen I, Khama III, and Sebele I travel to Britain to oppose the proposed transfer of their territories to BSAC administrative control.

1896: Failure of Jameson Raid ends the immediate threat of the Protectorate's transfer to BSAC control. Rinderpest (*bolwane*) destroys livestock and wild life. Botswana south of the Molopo annexed to the Cape Colony.

1897: Mafikeng to Bulawayo railway built. Second Anglo-Batlhaping War.

1898: Boers settle in Ghanzi.

1899: The major Batswana "reserves" are demarcated and the Hut Tax is introduced.

1899-1902: Batswana fight in the South African (Boer) War. Bakgatla conquer territory between Kgatleng and Rustenburg but are forced by the British to give it up. Barolong and others defend Mafikeng.

1902: Khama moves capital from Palapye to Serowe.

1903-05: Thousands of Ovaherero and Nama refugees flee to Botswana to escape German genocides in Namibia.

1905-06: British depose and detain without trial *Kgosi* Sekgoma Letsholathebe of the Batawana.

1908: Bathoen and Sebele petition against incorporation into proposed Union of South Africa. Germans invade south western Botswana in failed effort to defeat Nama of Simon Kopper.

1909: Batswana continue to protest against the Union of South Africa. Bathoen and Sebele send Gerrans to London as their representative. Germans occupy eastern Caprivi causing many local Bekuhane to flee across Chobe into Botswana.

1910: Bathoen I dies. Union of South Africa formed with provisions for future incorporation of Botswana. Sekgoma Letsholathebe loses case in Privy Council.

1911: Sebele I dies.

1912: Native Recruiting Corporation begins systematic recruitment of migrant labour for mines. Batswana delegates attend the inaugural conference of the African National Congress. Sekgoma Letsholathebe settles at Kavimba/Chobe, dies 1914.

Chapter One

The foundations of Botswana's history

History is the story of humankind's past.

It can be about events that occurred long ago. The fall of Babylon, which is mentioned in the Bible, is a true historical event that took place about 2 500 years ago.

Source 1

Ruins in Babylon

Source 2

Sir Ketumile Masire

History can also be about more recent happenings. The 1998 retirement of Sir Ketumile Masire is already described as an important historical event.

Whose story?

Obviously not everything that occurred yesterday is significant enough to be remembered as history.

How do people decide what should be recorded for the future?

This is not an easy question. Historians do not always agree about what is important.

Often the way people see the present determines the way they see the past. For example, many history books about South Africa begin in 1652, the year white settlers from the Netherlands began to settle at the Cape. White South African authors wrote these books. They were brought up in a society in which white people alone had political power. To them South Africa's history was a story about the actions of white people.

Southern Africa had a history long before the arrival of white people. A thousand years ago, this region, including Botswana, had hundreds of stone-walled settlements. Trade networks stretching between the Atlantic and Indian Oceans connected these places to one another. On the borders of the Kgalagadi today people sometimes find seashells, which were brought to Botswana by traders for use as jewellery long ago.

The history of Botswana has not always been taught in detail in schools. From 1885 to 1966 Botswana came under British rule. During this period rulers tried to justify their authority. They told the Batswana that they had no past worth remembering. Instead the Batswana were taught that they had been saved by the British. The British Queen Victoria, known locally as Mmamosadinyana, was said to have stopped the Boers from taking Botswana. One of their books about Bechuanaland, as they called Botswana, written in 1965, stated:

WORDS

Someone who studies history is a **historian.** A historian does not have to be a teacher or a university professor. Anybody who is interested in looking at the past is a historian. You too can be a historian!

Have you ever heard a statement like the one in Source 3 that says "Happy is the nation that has no history"? Do you think people are content not to know their history? Why?

Source 3

Happy is the nation that has no history. By this standard there can be few nations in Africa happier than Bechuanaland, for apart from the inter and intra tribal conflicts normal to the African continent before its emergence into modern life and thought, its record is remarkably free of incident of any kind. The Batswana offered an equally friendly reception to missionaries, traders and soldiers alike when they came to offer their various recipes for happiness and since the British drew a line on the map and said, "This is Bechuanaland" they have lived quietly and undemandingly for seventy uneventful years.

In 1970 the first President of Botswana, Sir Seretse Khama, rejected this statement. He said,

Source 4

We were taught, sometimes in a very positive way, to despise ourselves and our ways of life. We were made to believe that we had no past to speak of, no history to boast of. The past, so far as we were concerned, was just a blank and nothing more . . . It should now be our intention to try to retrieve what we can of our past. We should write our own history books, to prove that we did have a past and that it was a past that was just as worth writing and learning about as any other. We must do this for the simple reason that a nation without a past is a lost nation and a people without a past are a people without a soul.

Around the world people living in different nations study their own history to know more about themselves.

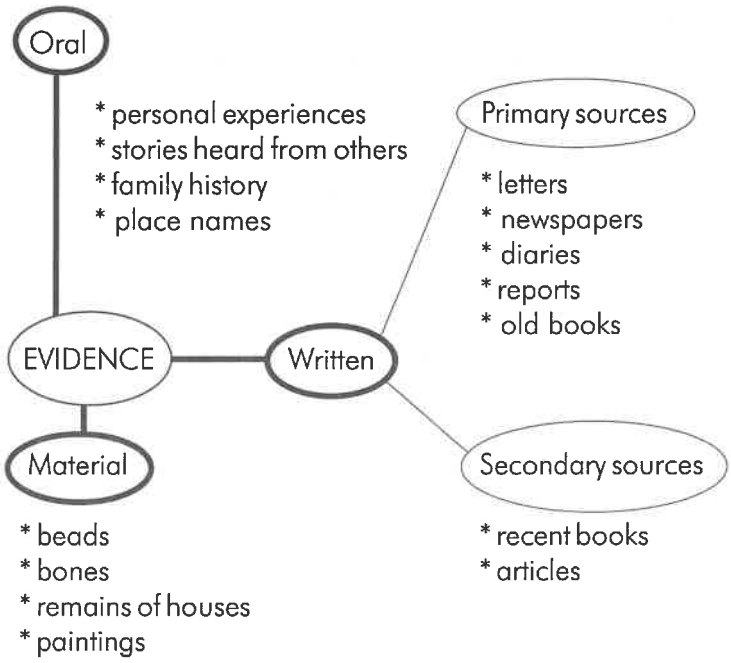
Imagine waking up one morning having completely forgotten where you came from. You would be confused and uncertain of what to do. It is the same for a community or nation. To know where to go, you need to know where you have been.

1. What did Sir Seretse Khama mean when he said in Source 4, "we were taught, sometimes in a very positive way, to despise ourselves"?

2. Botswana's old British rulers understood that the people who did not know their past were like trees without roots that could be pushed aside easily. Explain this using Sir Seretse Khama's argument.

How do historians find out about the past?

Unfortunately there is much about Botswana's past that we will never know. Here, as elsewhere in the world, many important events and personalities of the past have been forgotten. Historians are limited in what they can know about the past. They need to find evidence or proof to tell them about the people of the past. There are three main types of historical evidence.



Written evidence

Written evidence can include official documents, letters, old newspaper articles and books. Written historical evidence is divided between **primary sources** and **secondary sources.**

History books are secondary sources. This is because when we read them we get our information about the past second hand, that is from the book's author(s). Primary written sources provide historical researchers with original information about the past. An old diary kept by a person travelling through Botswana during the 1860s is an example of a primary source. It will provide a first-hand account of its writer's observations from the period.

You have been asked to write a history of your school.

1. What kinds of written evidence will you use?

2. Divide this written evidence into primary and secondary sources.

3. What other kinds of evidence can you think of that you could use?

Written evidence about Botswana only goes back to the beginning of the nineteenth century (1800). How do we find out what happened before that?

Oral evidence

Many events that have never been written down exist in the memories of people as oral evidence. Elders often remember significant events that were part of their own lives. They can thus give us eyewitness accounts of their experiences. The information we receive from eyewitness accounts may be about big events, such as Seretse Khama's return from exile to Botswana. Older people can also teach us important things about the changes in everyday life that have occurred in their lifetimes. Elders who know traditional Batswana conservation practices, for example, can help Botswana protect its environment today.

Stories about your own family are part of oral history.

Oral traditions are another kind of oral evidence.

People often learn traditions by listening to grandparents, aunts and uncles. A few oral traditions were even written down as early as the nineteenth century. This has helped historians because traditions are usually forgotten or distorted as years pass. Fortunately, there have been efforts to record surviving oral traditions for future generations. In recent years staff and student researchers at the University of Botswana have been especially active in the preservation of oral traditions.

Try to remember an interesting story that you have been told about a member of your family. Choose a story that gives you some idea of what life was like at the time. Tell the story to one of your classmates. Will you tell your children this story?

Case study: Oral evidence

The University of Botswana's History Research Project was started in 1976. The aim of the research was and still is to encourage scholarship in the history of Botswana. Over the years, the history students at the university have researched many aspects of Botswana's history. The research project involves oral interviews, archival research, and use of secondary material.

One of the authors of this book reconstructed the history of the town of Lobatse using the three methods of research described above. The written reports from these UB history student projects are available to the public at the UB library, Botswana's National Archives and the National Library, all in Gaborone.

WORDS

Traditions are stories about past events that have been passed down from generation to generation.

We don't have many written sources about people who lived long ago in Botswana because Batswana were not exposed to writing until the nineteenth century. Oral evidence usually takes us no further back than the seventeenth century. So how do we learn about earlier history?

We have to look at the things that people left behind. These things are called material evidence.

Material evidence

Objects both large and small can be used as material evidence. A glass bead once traded from the Indian Ocean is a piece of material evidence. So are the remains of old settlements, like Great Zimbabwe. Pictures such as ancient rock paintings or photographs are also material evidence. Old tools, pottery and bones are other examples. One can see much material evidence about Botswana's past in museums. The National Museum and Art Gallery in Gaborone is the biggest in Botswana. There are also local museums in Francistown, Mochudi, Molepolole, Serowe, Maun and D'Kar.

1. Which museum is nearest you?

2. Visit the museum and note the different kinds of material evidence you can see.

3. Report your findings to the class.

Material evidence is often collected by archaeologists.

Since independence, archaeologists have discovered many new things about the early history of Botswana. For example, the remains of cattle, sheep and goats tell us that people in Botswana have been keeping livestock for over 2 000 years. We also know that 1 500 years ago local communities were making iron tools.

Case study: Archaeological evidence

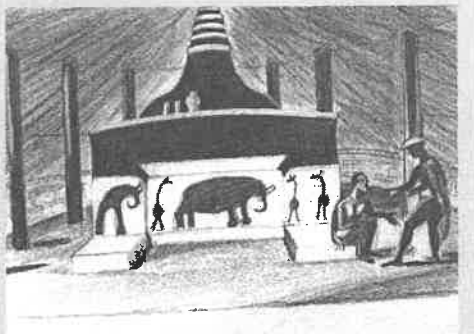
Source 5

This 1820 drawing of a very large house belonging to a wealthy Motswana at Kaditshwene is an example of material evidence. The actual material remains of Kaditshwene (near Zeerust) are now being excavated by archaeologists.

WORDS

Archaeologists are people who also study the past. They look for material evidence by going through the remains of old settlements. It is almost impossible for people who have spent time at a place not to leave evidence that they were there. Archaeologists will study paths, sleeping places and even broken pots or the remains of animals for clues about how people lived.

John Campbell, a traveller, described this house as follows: "Sinosee's [Senosi's] house was neatly finished; it was circular like all the others, having not only the wall plastered both within and without, but likewise the inside of the roof. The wall was painted yellow and ornamented with figures of shields, elephants, camelopards [giraffes], etc. It was also adorned with a neat cornice or border painted of a red colour. In some houses, there were figures, etc. carved or moulded in hard clay, and painted with different colours ... They are indeed an ingenious people ... Every part of their houses and yards is kept



very clean. They smelt both iron and copper. The rainmaker took us to see one furnace, in which they smelted iron. It was built of clay, almost equal in hardness to stone."

Source 6

This is an archaeological site where archaeologists Are investigating how this wall was built.

1. Prepare a brief lecture on any aspect of archaeology.

2. Present your lecture to the class.

All kinds of material objects are considered precious by archaeologists. They carefully dig up all these remains. They know that in almost all cases, the oldest material will be at the bottom and the most recent on top. Archaeologists make maps of the material left on a site to tell us how different people used their living space. Sometimes it is possible to work out what people ate, how they adapted to the environment, how they treated each other and even what they believed in.

Other sources of information

Historians occasionally use other types of evidence. Languages, for instance, can provide historical information. Languages like Setswana, Isizulu and Kiswahili belong to a common Bantu language family. This tells us that the people who speak those languages are descended from people long ago who were closely related. Setswana has words of foreign origin, such as *tafole* from the Afrikaans word *tafel* (table). This is evidence of past contacts between Batswana and Afrikaners.

We will look more closely at the uses of language in Botswana's history later in this book.

Evidence about humankind's past can also be found in the natural environment. For example, the rings of an old tree trunk can indicate past years of drought. The existence of foreign plants and animals in a region shows where it was connected to by trade. Maize, for example, came to southern Africa from South America only three centuries ago.

Using the evidence

There are advantages and disadvantages in using each of the various sources of historical evidence. We have already looked at some disadvantages of oral and written evidence. Can you remember what they were?

Material evidence can tell us many things about the way people lived in the past. A pile of animal bones in old settlements shows whether the inhabitants were primarily hunters or herders. But objects do not talk and cannot tell us everything we need to know. In an old battle field archaeologists may dig up weapons of war, such as spears and axes. Such evidence will tell them something about how people once fought there, but not why they were fighting. An object cannot tell us the name of its owner or what language he or she spoke.

Written and oral evidence is always affected by human biases or points of view. During the nineteenth century many missionaries came to Botswana and wrote about their experiences. These writings are a good primary source for local history. Historians who read the missionaries' books must be careful, though. Missionaries often made little attempt to understand local life and culture, which they saw as unchristian. They usually dismissed Tswana medicine, for example, as witchcraft. Many traditional doctors (*dingaka*)

WORDS

Dikgosi is the plural of *kgosi*. The **kgosi** is the executive, judicial and legislative leader of the **morafe**, the people or community. The word can also refer to the eldest son of the ranking wife of a deceased *kgosi*.

though, were able to cure diseases. Missionaries also spoke well of those who accepted their teachings. So they praised *Kgosi* Khama of the Bangwato and denounced his father, Sekgoma, who hated Christianity. Likewise the British who ruled Botswana after 1885 liked those *dikgosi* who co-operated with them. But they called *dikgosi* like Linchwe I of the Bakgatla and Sebele I of the Bakwena "troublesome chiefs" because they stood up for their people's independence. So historians must try to understand the biases that exist in written and oral evidence.

Source 7

Missionary Edwin Lloyd wrote in September 1896:

I have long seen that their cattle stood between our people and their progress. While they possessed so many cattle, the young men and boys were obliged to herd them, and were prevented from coming to our schools to learn. In addition, the cattleposts were the principal schools of heathenism, where untold evil was both taught and practised.

Identifying the point of view of a source

Read Source 7 which is taken from a diary of a missionary in Botswana.

1. What cause would a missionary be supporting?

2. How has he expressed himself?

3. When and under what circumstances do you think he wrote this diary? Did he have to think carefully about what he said?

4. Why do you think he was writing a diary?

What have I learnt?

1. Name the three types of historical evidence.
2. Draw up a table showing their advantages and disadvantages.

Type of evidence	Advantages	Disadvantages

Chapter Two

Migration and settlement before 1800 - an introduction

Introduction

While Botswana's population of approximately 1.5 million is relatively small, this country has long been the home of many different peoples. Most of the African peoples living in Botswana today were there by 1800. They spoke different languages, had different beliefs and customs and were organised into different types of societies. Botswana's modern population reflects this long-standing diversity.

This book will describe how, after 1800, all these groups came together to form a nation.

The diversity of Botswana's population is also due to the fact that different communities had to adapt themselves to different environments. Some people have settled in the dry Kgalagadi, also known as the Kalahari, others have settled around the Okavango swamps. Such different situations have encouraged people to adopt different ways of life. But, despite their differences, the people of Botswana have always been similar in many ways.

WORDS

The **Kgalagadi** is the large area of bush-covered, semi-arid land that makes up half of our country. It is often referred to as a desert.

Early times

People have lived in Botswana since the beginning of humankind. Early Stone Age tools and skeletons that are 500 000 years old have been found in eastern Botswana. Other tools that have been found show that these Stone Age peoples never left the region. They used stone tools until some 1500 years ago and lived by hunting game and gathering wild foods.

WORDS

The **Stone Age** began about 1,5 million years ago. It is called the Stone Age because people made stone tools and weapons.

Who do you think found these tools and skeletons? What kind of evidence is this?

Botswana's earliest known inhabitants spoke Khoisan languages. Today their descendants are commonly called Basarwa, Bushmen or San. Most Basarwa speak one of a dozen or so major Khoe (or Khoi) languages. However, these Khoe languages are very different from one another. Also, two other groups of Khoisan languages - Zhu and !Xho - cannot be understood by Khoe speakers. They are very different from Khoe.

Batswana often think that Basarwa speak one language (Sesarwa), but this is incorrect. Batswana also often believe that Basarwa live only in the remote areas of the country. But long ago they lived all over the country and continue to do so.

Pastoralism

The remains of domestic animals have been found in Botswana that are 2 000 years old. Pastoralism came to this region then. Khoe communities living in northern Botswana probably introduced livestock keeping. This helps to explain why the Setswana words for cow (*kgomo*), goat (*podi*) and sheep (*nku*) may all be of Khoe origin.

Once pastoralism began, the Khoisan people took up other activities as well, including farming, fishing and mining. People started building bigger villages. The oldest known permanent settlements in Botswana are 2 100 years old. Remains of pottery, cattle dung and rubbish heaps have been found here. Fishermen in the Okavango-Chobe area also started similar settlements.

WORDS

Pastoralism means farming with livestock.

What do you think causes people to establish settlements?

The Iron Age

Iron tools appeared in Botswana 1 500 years ago. When iron comes to an area, the Stone Age ends and the Iron Age begins. Iron-making brings many advantages, such as making farming easier.

WORDS

The **Iron Age** began in Southern Africa about 1 500 years ago when people began making things out of iron.

It is a commonly believed myth that the Khoisan people never moved into the Iron Age. This is not true because as soon as iron became available, all the people in Botswana began to use it.

Source 1

Batswana smelting and forging iron

Once they got iron, some Khoisan pastoralists were able to start farming more intensively, using the iron axe and hoe. They began trading iron goods and other items. This trade, combined with farming, allowed larger settlements to develop.

The Iron Age is an example of how technology can change people's lives. Can you think of any technology that has changed your life?

How do you think the coming of iron changed the pastoralists' lives?

Bantu speakers from central Africa probably brought iron technology to Botswana from central Africa. The word *Bantu*, like Khoisan, refers to a group of languages. Bantu languages commonly spoken in Botswana include such Sotho-Tswana languages as Setswana, Sekgalagadi and Sepedi. Ikalanga, Otjiherero, Seyei, Tjimbukushu and Chikuhane (Sesubia) are also Bantu but they are not Sotho-Tswana. Bantu speakers began to settle in Botswana by 200 AD. All of the above Bantu languages were locally represented by 1800.

Source 2

This painting by Samuel Daniell is one of the earliest depictions of a Khoe farming settlement

Between 600 and 1100 AD many Iron Age settlements grew throughout the north east and Central Districts. The people of that time and their culture are called *Zhizo* by archaeologists.

The Late Iron Age

By 1100 AD the people of Botswana were living a much more advanced kind of life. They cultivated big fields, traded over long distances and had complex cultures. This later part of the Iron Age lasted until 1800.

Bakalanga settlements during the Iron Age

Sometime after 1100, Bakalanga built large settlements in north eastern Botswana and Zimbabwe. The Bakalanga and related Vashona are particularly well known for building Late

Iron Age stone-walled structures called *Zimbabwes*. The largest and most famous of these is the Great Zimbabwe. Between 1250 and 1450, Great Zimbabwe was part of a settlement of some 10 000 inhabitants.

Source 3

The Zimbabwe Ruins

Source 4

A stone-walled settlement in Mjande

Can you see that these stone walls are similar, even though some are now in Zimbabwe and some in Botswana? Can you offer any reasons for this similarity?

After 1450, much of north eastern Botswana and western Zimbabwe came under the rule of the Bakalanga Kingdom of Butwa. This kingdom lasted until 1840 under the rule of the Chibundule (Torwa) and Nichasike (Rozwi) dynasties. The

wealth of Butwa was partially based on gold mining. Over 200 ancient gold mines are known in the Tati area alone.

Butwa had several large and impressive towns, such as Khami, Naletale and Danangombe (Dlhodlho). All are located in western Zimbabwe. Remains of many smaller stone-walled settlements, such as Domboshaba, Old Tati, Mjande and Majojo, are in Botswana. These Botswana-based settlements had hundreds of residents. The patterns of their homes are similar to those of the modern Bakalanga.

WORDS

A **dynasty** is a family of kings or other rulers whose parents, grand-parents, etc. have ruled for many years.

Have you ever visited some of these ruins?

What kinds of evidence would you expect to find at these ruins?

Case study: Toutswemogala

One of the most studied of Botswana's Iron Age settlements is Toutswemogala, 35km north of Palapye. It first emerged around 700 AD as a Zhizo-type village. For centuries it prospered as a trading site, while dozens of smaller Toutswe-type settlements were established in the Central District. Between 1300 and 1500 there seems to have been a population decline in the Toutswe settlements. People may have left due to overgrazing and prolonged drought. Toutswemogala was finally abandoned around 1700. This settlement is important because the ancestors of the modern Batswana and Bakalanga are believed to have lived there.

Source 5

Thomas Baines' engraving of a Bakalanga trader

Sotho-Tswana settlement during the Iron Age

The known origins of Sotho-Tswana settlement date back to fifth century Iron Age sites in south eastern Botswana and the North-West and Gauteng Provinces of South Africa. Over time, larger stone-walled settlements emerged. Aerial photographs have revealed thousands of stone-walled ruins between the Limpopo and Orange rivers. Usually they were built on hilltops so that their inhabitants could defend themselves.

Large populations of Sotho-Tswana speakers lived on the South African highveld before the coming of the Europeans. Batswana settlements increased in size rapidly after 1500. By the seventeenth century (1600-99), many Batswana communities in what is now South Africa lived in villages of 5 000 or more. Settlements in Botswana tended to be smaller. They only became bigger after 1850, when trading expanded.

Bantu origins of the people of Botswana

Sotho-Tswana origins

Archaeology suggests that Batswana and Bakgalagadi have been present in Botswana since 400 AD. Oral traditions, though, only talk about what happened more recently.

Different Sotho-Tswana groups migrated in and out of Botswana long before 1500. There was, though, a period of depopulation between about 1300 and 1500. Perhaps this is the reason why oral traditions differ from the archaeological evidence.

Can you think of any other reasons?

In some of their oldest traditions, both Batswana and Bakgalagadi actually claim to have originated in Botswana. Both groups claim to be descended from an early hero named Matsieng.

Source 6

In the beginning of time Matsieng was held as a prisoner in the underworld, below the earth's surface, by a god-like figure known as Tintibane. Then a one-legged being called Lowe showed Matsieng how to escape from the underworld to Botswana through a cave. It is said that Matsieng's cave is located near Mochudi.

Do you think that this story is true? Say why or why not.

The story underscores the important point that the Batswana and Bakgalagadi peoples of this country see themselves as belonging to the land. According to oral tradition the modern Bakgalagadi groups settled in most areas of Botswana before the Batswana.

The Bakgalagadi

The name Bakgalagadi means people of Kgalagadi. Bakgalagadi or Bakgalagari is a collective term for a number of related groups who all speak the Sekgalagadi language. Sekgalagadi is related to, but separate from Setswana. The Bakgalagadi groups include the Bakwatlheng, Baphaleng, Baboloangwe, Bangologa and Bashaga.

The first four of the above groups were once a single people who later split up. All four claim to have once been part of the Barolong and to have settled in Botswana by 1500. The Bashaga also claim to have broken off from the Barolong, but at a much later date.

Bakgalagadi, as their name suggests, have long lived in the Kgalagadi desert. During the seventeenth century, though, many Bakgwatlheng and Baboloangwe lived in south eastern Botswana. During the 1600s most of the region came under the political control of the Bakwena. Rather than submit to Bakwena rule, many Bakgwatlheng and Baboloangwe then migrated into the Kgalagadi. There they joined other communities of Baboloangwe and Bangologa. At about the same time, the Baphaleng broke off from the Bakgwatlheng and established themselves in the Central District.

The Batswana

The Bakwena-ba-ga-Kgabo of Botswana are among the oldest Batswana communities in Botswana. They broke away from the Bakwena-ba-ga-Mogopa of South Africa during the early seventeenth century. But other traditions indicate that Bakwena groups had been in the area much earlier. When the Bakwena came, they seized the region around Molepolole from the Bakgwatlheng. From there they began to build up their wealth through trading animal skins.

During the eighteenth century two sections of the Bakwena broke away to form their own *merafe*. These were the Bangwaketse and Bangwato. The Bangwaketse moved to Seoke, near modern Lobatse, where they remained until the early nineteenth century. Some of Seoke's stone-walled remains still survive. After breaking away from the Bakwena, the Bangwato established themselves in the Shoshong Hills. Later still, during the 1790s the Batawana broke away from Bangwato and settled in Ngamiland.

Other Batswana groups that settled in Botswana before 1800 include the Bakaa and Bakhurutshe. The Bakhurutshe are a branch of the Bahurutse who eventually settled in north eastern Botswana. Their Bakalanga neighbours called them Bakhurutshe. The Bakaa are an offshoot of the Barolong. Their name comes from "*ba ka ya*". When they broke away, the Barolong *kgosi* is reported to have said, "*Ba ka ya jaaka ba boletse*" (they can go). Other, smaller Barolong groups had settled throughout Botswana by 1800.

We will look more closely at the history of these groups in Chapter 3.

Other Sotho-Tswana groups

Other Sotho-Tswana groups who had settled in Botswana by 1800 included the Babirwa, Bapedi and Batswapong. The Babirwa have been living in the region around Bobonong for several centuries. Their name is derived from an ancient ruler named Mmirwa, who apparently paid tribute to the Bakalanga kings of Butwa. The Sebirwa dialect is closely related to the Sepedi or Northern Sotho language.

Batswapong is a collective name for a number of different groups that have lived together around the Tswapong Hills for a long time. Most of these groups claim Bapedi origin. By 1800 other groups of Bapedi had also settled throughout the Central District.

Bakalanga-Sotho-Tswana interrelationships

Groups can change their language. For example, the Bakalanga-ba-ka-Nswazwi speak Ikalanga, but trace their origins to Bapedi, a Sotho-Tswana speaking group. During the eighteenth century, this Bapedi group moved into the Bukalanga region and then adopted the Ikalanga language and customs.

The Batalaote were once Bakalanga who gradually adopted the Setswana language and culture of neighbouring Central District groups. The name Batalaote is derived from an early leader, Dalaunde, who was known as Ntalaote by the Batswana. Traditions say that Dalaunde and then his son, Sankoloba, led the group from Zimbabwe to the Shoshong Hills. There they lived near the Bakaa and Bangwato.

This shows us how sometimes people's identities can change.

Other Bantu-speaking groups

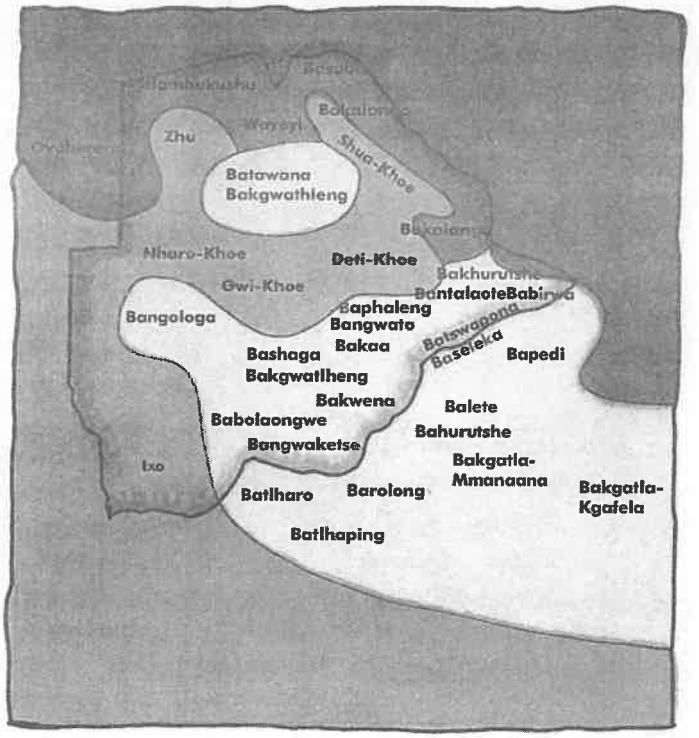
Many other Bantu speakers live in the Ngamiland-Chobe region. The Wayeyi (Bayeyi), Hambukushu and Bekuhane (Basubia) are the largest of these. All three of these groups migrated into Botswana from central Africa, but no one knows for sure when they first came. Some may have been here by 1500, while others arrived in more recent times. We know that Hambukushu were living in Ngamiland before 1800, but in recent years others have arrived as refugees from Angola. As far as we know, the Wayeyi, Hambukushu and Bekuhane had not formed any large states before 1800.

Another large Bantu-speaking group found in Botswana is the Ovaherero. Most local Ovaherero left Namibia after 1897 to escape German rule. But some Ovaherero had lived along the Namibian border in earlier times. Today Ovaherero can be found throughout Botswana. The largest communities are at Mahalapye and in Ngamiland.

Source 7

Herero woman

Source 8



Identify where you live on this map.

1. What groups are living there today?

2. What languages are spoken in your area today?

3. Why do you think the groups moved or changed?

Discuss the answers with your class.

We will learn more about the history of these people in Chapter 4.

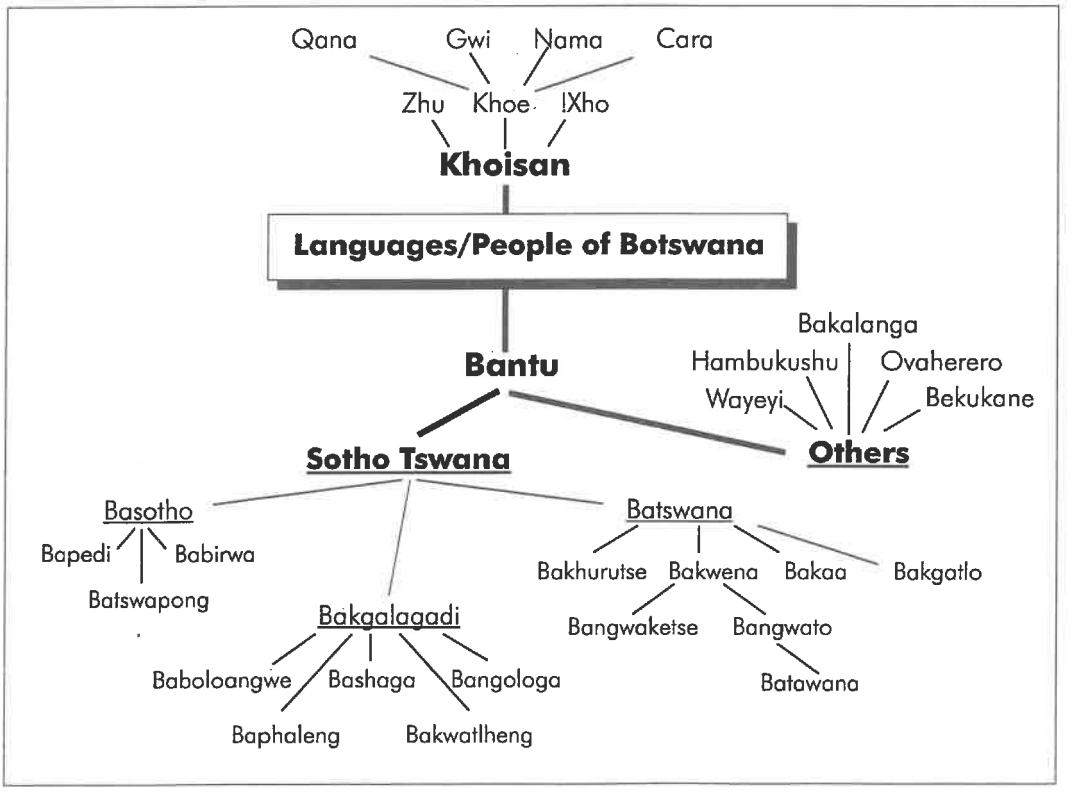
This is a time line showing the settlement of Botswana. However, the events are not chronological. Sort out the events on this time line so that they are in order.

By 700:	Emergence of larger semi-permanent settlements; Botswana region integrated into coastal trading networks
1300-1500:	Evidence of depopulation; possible dry phase
500 000 years ago:	Early Stone Age in Botswana
By 200 BCE:	Pastoralism in Botswana
By 200:	Bantu speakers in Botswana
1690s:	Bakalanga kingdom under Nichasike defeats Portuguese
By 350:	Early Iron Age in Botswana; spread of arable agriculture
1100:	Late Iron Age in Botswana
25 000 BCE:	Late Stone Age in Botswana; rock paintings in the region
1450:	Bakalanga kingdom of Butwa emerges
By 1800:	Bakgalagadi, Bakalanga, Batswana, Wayeyi, Babirwa, Bapedi, Hambukushu and Bekuhane settled in Botswana

A time line can help you to keep historical events in order. Here's how to draw one:

1. Decide what length you want your time line to be. Decide whether you want to work in single years, or fifty-year periods.
2. Fill in the dates that mark your time line on the left-hand side of the time line. Starting from the top, work your way down to the present.
3. Then plot the dates of the important events on the right-hand side.
4. Write a description of the event next to each date on the right-hand side.
5. Give your time line a heading.

Making notes using a diagram is a useful way to study. Here is a diagram on the origins of the people of Botswana.



How to make notes using a diagram

1. Read the original text.
2. In the middle of your page, write your key word. This is the main idea or theme of the text.
3. Skim through the text. This means you only read the key words, headings and important facts.
4. Draw one branch for each main topic. Write the topic on each branch.
5. Divide each topic branch into smaller branches or ideas.
6. Add branches where necessary.
7. Use pictures, symbols and colours to illustrate your diagram.

What have I learnt?

Pastoralism and the use of iron technology changed the way of life of the people living in Botswana. How did these change

a) the settlements, e.g. the houses and land?
b) the economy?
c) the social structure?

In the next chapters we will look at the people of Botswana in more detail.

Chapter Three

Southern Botswana before 1820

For centuries, southern Botswana has been the home of Batswana, Bakgalagadi and Khoisan (or Basarwa) communities. By 1820, the Bangwaketse and Bakwena, who were militarily strong, controlled most of southern Botswana. Both of these **merafe** had many Bakgalagadi and Khoisan **malata**. But in areas more to the west, the modern day Kgalagadi district, many Bakgalagadi and Khoisan lived independently.

By 1820, Batswana, Bakgalagadi and Basarwa were linked together closely in a master-servant relationship known as *bolata*.

How did this relationship come about? To find the answer, we need to look right back to the fifteenth century...

The servitude of the Khoisan speakers: The Khoe and !Xo

As we saw in Chapter 2, southern Botswana's oldest inhabitants spoke Khoisan languages.

Bolata began hundreds of years ago in southern Botswana. Far back in the fifteenth century, as the Bakgalagadi moved deeper into the Kgalagadi, they came into conflict with its

original Khoisan-speaking Basarwa inhabitants. The Bakgalagadi conquered and then ruled the Basarwa communities. Soon, a pattern emerged in which many Basarwa were forced to work for Bakgalagadi masters.

A Mokgalagadi royal named Gaoongwe Seloilwe recounted the following account of an early war between the Babolaongwe and the Khoi. He told how Bakgalagadi began to own Basarwa as *malata*:

Source 1

Long ago the Basarwa were a nation, they were not owned by the Bakgalagadi ... It came about once that the Basarwa *kgosi* assembled the Basarwa and said to them, 'Let arrows and quivers be made, the time may come when we will fight with the Bakgalagadi ...'And on the day which the Basarwa *kgosi* had appointed as the day of battle the Bakgalagadi *kgosi* chose a man to go and see if the Basarwa were in their village and he did so (and found them dancing). And early in the morning the (Bakgalagadi) army set out; and at daybreak it found the Basarwa still dancing and the army fell upon them. And the armies came together, starting at sunrise; and at noon they were still fighting together. Thus Basarwa shot arrows, but did not injure the Bakgalagadi; and the Bakgalagadi killed many of the Basarwa, killing them with great slaughter. At last there remained only the *kgosi* of the Basarwa. And as they were pursuing him his arrows got finished and the Bakgalagadi seized him, saying, 'Come on into the shade, that we may cut off your head, a *kgosi* cannot die in the sun.' He came and stood in the shade and his head was severed. Thereupon the Bakgalagadi *kgosi* ordered that the Basarwa women and the small Basarwa children should be rounded up and brought home. Beginning here, in the time of *Kgosi* Seloilwe I, the Bakgalagadi began to own the Basarwa...

WORDS

This system of forced labour is generally referred to as **bolata**. Although **malata** were rarely sold by their masters, they were not free to move around without permission. A master could transfer his control over **malata** to others, such as his relatives and children. **Malata** can thus be said to have been people who were virtually owned by others.

Slavery and servitude are features of many different communities throughout history, for example:

1. The word "slave" comes from the Slavic people who were frequently enslaved by others.
2. The Romans enslaved people from nations they defeated in war.
3. African kingdoms, such as the West African kingdom of Dahomey, were often built on the slave trade. Dahomey was notorious for enslaving people whom they then sold to the Europeans.

Most of the southern Baswara still speak one of the various Khoi languages and belong to such groups as the Qana-Khoe, Gwi-Khoe, Nama-Khoe and Cara-Khoe. The first two of these groups live today in the Central Kgalagadi. The Cara-Khoe are found in the Kweneng and Kgatleng. Today most Nama-Khoe live in Namibia, but they have long hunted and travelled in the western areas of Botswana. During the early twentieth century, many fled to Botswana as refugees from Namibia.

Do research on at least one other society where people were enslaved, comparing the development and functioning of their system with the development and functioning of *bolata*. Report your findings to the class.

The other Khoisan speakers of southern Botswana are !Xo, who also live in Namibia and South Africa. Their language is very different from that of the Khoe. Unfortunately, very few speakers of !Xo are still alive today. Afrikaners killed and enslaved most of them two hundred years ago, while the Bakgalagadi and Nama-Khoe conquered others. Those who remained were integrated into other groups and lost their cultural identity as !Xo people.

Do you remember discussing language as a source of historical evidence in Chapter 1? What do you think the differences in the Khoisan languages could tell us about the history of these people?

In the nineteenth century, the Khoisan culture was regarded as a tourist interest. By the 1870s, it was common for white entertainment promoters to go to the Cape or southern Botswana to look for a member of the "vanishing race of Bushmen". Any Khoisan unfortunate enough to meet one of these promoters was likely to be kidnapped and taken to Europe or America where they were exhibited as members of the "oldest race on earth" and made to dance and perform.

A famous example is that of Saartjie Baartman, a young Khoisan woman who was taken to Europe and exhibited as a freak in England and France in the early nineteenth century. She was billed as the "Hottentot Venus", which refers to the Roman goddess of love, Venus. This name is ironic, because not all Europeans found her beautiful or sexual. After five years of sordid exhibition in Europe, Baartman died at the age of 25 in Paris, where her body was donated to scientific research. After her death, her body was dissected and preserved in formalin - some parts are still stored somewhere in a back room of the Musee de'l homme in Paris. There are continuing negotiations over returning her remains to South Africa.

1. Today people are calling Saartjie "the icon of racial inferiority and female sexuality".
   a) In what way do you think Saartjie could symbolise racial inferiority?
   b) Comment on her image as "sexual", based on her title as the "Hottentot Venus"? Do you think that Europeans thought of her as sexual?
2. Do you agree that her remains should be returned to South Africa?

The fall of the Bakgalagadi

From the seventeenth century, some Batswana defeated Bakgalagadi and made them into *malata*. In the course of these wars, a number of people avoided *bolata* and remained free by fleeing into the remote areas of the Kgalagadi.

In Chapter 2, we saw that the Bakgalagadi are divided into five major groups. Four of these groups have lived in southern Botswana for centuries: the Bakgwatlheng, Babolaongwe, Bangologa and Bashaga. The fifth group, the Baphaleng, have lived in the north since breaking away from the Bakgwatlheng during the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century.

In the seventeenth century, many Bakgalagadi, then mostly Bakgwatlheng, were living at Dithejwane, near Molepolole, under *Kgosi* Magane. At that time, the Bakwena under *Kgosi* Kgabo arrived in the area and eventually defeated the Bakgalagadi in a series of wars. Some of the Bakgalagadi became *malata*, while others fled into the Central District and the Kgalagadi. So the Bakgalagadi spread far and wide across Botswana.

As a result of their defeats, the Bakgalagadi became poorer than they had previously been. Their poverty is reflected in a praise poem of the Bakwena *Kgosi* Tshosa (1803-7), who claimed that it was a waste of time to fight them:

Source 2

I oppose the killing of Bakgalagadi in battle,
They are but paupers who own nothing of their own;
A rich man conquers those rich like himself
A handsome man eats those as handsome as he is.

Comment on how this praise poem shows a change in perception of who were considered "paupers" or servants. What do the attitudes in this poem tell us about the way the Bakwena and Bakgalagadi came into contact?

One of the great Bakgwatlheng heroes is Magane's grandson Mabeleng. Around 1770, he and his people were the *malata* of the Bangwaketse. So Mabeleng decided to break away and lead his people deeper into the Kgalagadi. When *Kgosi* Mongala heard of this breakaway, he pursued the Ba-kgwatlheng. Mongala was killed in battle. After his death, wars continued, until most of the Bakgalagadi were captured in the time of Mabeleng's son, Seeiso. Then the Bangwaketse *kgosi* broke the Bakgalagadi up and divided them as *malata* among his followers, so that they would never revolt again.

Mabeleng was a great resistance leader. Today, many Africans respect Nelson Mandela as one of the great resistance leaders of all time. To the Bakgwatlheng, Mabeleng was like Nelson Mandela is to us.

Because the Bakgalagadi split up into a number of small groups after their defeat by the Bakwena, they did not have any strong chiefs. They lived in very small communities, mostly of around several hundred people. Gradually, these groups gave themselves names, but they were originally Bakgwatlheng.

It is interesting to note that some Bakgalagadi claim Batswana origins.

One of the groups, perhaps the largest Bakgalagadi group in Botswana, is the Bangologa. There are oral traditions on the origins of this group:

Mongologa is said to have been the name of a Morolong royal, the younger son of a chief. After failing in an attempt to take **bogosi** from his brother, he and his followers fled to Matsheng, the region around Hukuntsi, Lehututu and Tshane. With a few followers he then established his rule over the Bakgwatlheng in the area, who were thereafter called the Bangologa. The Bangologa distinguished themselves by engaging in trading skins with Batswana in the south.

Source 3

1. What kinds of sources do you notice are used when working on the history of Botswana before 1820? Find three examples of sources used so far.
2. Why do you think these kinds of sources are used?

WORDS

Bogosi is the monarchy or chieftainship.

The earliest known leader of the Babolaongwe was Mbolawe. After breaking away from the Bakgwatlheng, Mbolawe moved his subjects to Mabuasehube.

The Bashaga have a separate origin from the above groups. They originally broke away from the Barolong. In the eighteenth century the Bashaga moved into southern Botswana under a *kgosi* named Modikele.

Draw a diagram or time line showing the changes that occurred in the Bakgalagadi people from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries. If you draw a diagram, use "Bakgalagadi" as the keyword.

Tribute or *sehuba*

While some Bakgalagadi were forced to work for Batswana every day as *malata*, others only had to pay them tribute or *sehuba*. *Sehuba* was an important feature of life in Botswana before 1900. It operated in several ways. A master, for instance, could demand that his *lelata* bring him a certain number of skins every month. However, *sehuba* did not necessarily depend on the existence of *bolata*. For example, one *morafe* that defeated another in a battle could then send over a group of men every year to collect *sehuba* from the other. The weak *morafe* might hand over cattle, skins, grain or other food, ivory or even people, to the more powerful group.

WORDS

Sehuba is a form of tribute, usually an annual payment given to a senior group or individual by a junior one.

A third way that *sehuba* operated was for all members of a *morafe* to give gifts to the *kgosi* every year. All *dikgosi* gained their wealth in this way.

"Even though *sehuba* operated in several different ways, it always did one thing: it allowed senior groups to take wealth from groups junior in rank."

Comment on this interpretation of the role of *sehuba*.

The rise of the Batswana

Prior to the 1840s, the Batswana were not a particularly powerful or numerous force in the Kgalagadi region, occupied by Bakgalagadi who had escaped *bolata*. They only came to prominence later on.

We will learn more about this in Section II.

Even today, millions of Batswana do not live within the boundaries of modern-day Botswana, but in South Africa. For instance, the Bahurutshe, Bakwena and other Batswana groups are found in Gauteng, the North-West Province and the Northern Province. Large numbers of Barolong and Batlhaping also live in the Northern Cape and the Free State. The Batswana of Botswana are closely related to these groups, especially the Bakwena-ba-ga-Mogopa and the Barolong. Sometime deep in the past, the Batswana were more or less concentrated in one place. Gradually they split up and began to move to other areas.

WORDS

The origin of the name **Batswana** is not agreed on by everyone. One explanation is that it comes from "*ba a tswana*" (those who come out of each other). Another possibility is that it comes from "*ba a tshwana*" (they are the same people). Of course, the Europeans could not pronounce these words correctly and so the term Batswana arose. Interestingly, each of the explanations makes the same point - Batswana keep splitting up and forming new *merafe*.

It is unclear when the Batswana first arrived in the southern Kgalagadi, but sometime before 1700, a group later known as the Bakwena-ba-ga-Kgabo split off from their old *morafe*, the ba-ga-Mogopa and moved into what later became known as the Kweneng. Many of the Batswana who live in Botswana today are descended from these original Bakwena.

Throughout their history, the Batswana *merafe* have always been prone to split up. This is usually because the *kgosi* had many sons, who would then argue over who should succeed their father as leader. On many occasions, one of the sons simply left the *morafe* with his own followers and established a new group. See how the following oral tradition emphasises the theme of rivalry among the sons of the *kgosi*:

The Bangwato and Bangwaketse get their names from their earliest **dikgosi**, Ngwato and Ngwaketse. But they were not independent rulers - they were both Bakwena. Tradition says that Ngwato and Ngwaketse were the brothers of Malope, who was a Bakwena **kgosi**. He then allowed his brothers to have their own separate **dikgotla**. Over time these **dikgotla** grew and began to become **merafe** on their own. Sometimes they clashed with each other, but the two groups were not enemies.

Source 4

By about 1790, the Bangwaketse had become powerful, under a renowned leader, Makaba II. He won a series of small wars against the Batlhaping, Bakgatla and others, taking many cattle. About this time, Makaba moved to the Kanye area and his people were thought to be one of the strongest and largest *merafe* of all the Batswana.

A case study is a detailed study of a person or group of people. It tells us how those people lived or what historians have learnt.

Read through the case study on the Bangwato people on page 33. Then answer the questions that follow.

1. Draw a family tree, showing the royal family of the Bangwato.
2. a) Do you think Mathiba wanted to be *kgosi* of the Bangwato? Explain why.
   b) Who else wanted Mathiba to be *kgosi*? Explain.
3. a) What motivated Mongwe to behave towards Mathiba as he did? Answer by explaining how you think Mongwe felt when Mathiba killed Mokgadi.
   b) Was Mongwe really offering Mathiba good advice in his dealings with Motswasele? Explain why you say so.
   c) Do you think Mongwe got his revenge? Explain your answer.
   d) If you found yourself in Mongwe's position, how would you have taken revenge?
4. Draw a general conclusion on the development of the Batswana people from this case study.

Case study: The origins of the Bangwato people

The Bangwato broke away from the Bakwena during the middle of the eighteenth century. Mathiba was their first independent ruler even though he is said to have been reluctant to leave the Bakwena. This case study comes from oral traditions.

Mathiba had lived happily at Boswelakgosi in the time of his father, Moleta. But after Moleta's death, Mathiba's uncle Mokgadi became the Bangwato motshwareledi *(regent). Mathiba's mother disliked Mokgadi because she thought he wanted to kill her son and become* kgosi. *So she sent Mathiba to live with Motswasele I,* kgosi *of the Bakwena.*

At this time, Motswasele was married to Mokgadi's daughter. He then asked to marry her sister as well, but Mokgadi refused. Motswasele became angry and asked Mathiba why he thought Mokgadi was refusing. Mathiba was afraid of his uncle and did not want to get involved. So he said, "Why do you ask me, am I the kgosi*?" Motswasele replied, "You are not the* kgosi *now, but if I make you* kgosi*, what will your attitude be?"*

Hearing this, Mathiba knew Motswasele wanted him to get rid of Mokgadi. So one night Mathiba and some friends went to Mokgadi's house and strangled him. The next morning, the Bangwato were shocked to find their leader's corpse and guessed that Mathiba had killed him. So they went to Motswasele's kgotla *to report what they had found. Motswasele told them Mathiba, whom he called a mature young man, had been with him all the previous night. He was really saying that he had given Mathiba permission to kill his uncle. Soon he made him* kgosi *of the Bangwato.*

One of Mokgadi's sons, Mongwe, wanted to take revenge. But first he and his friends pretended to accept Mathiba as kgosi. *He advised the new* kgosi *to do things without permission from Motswasele, such as ploughing. Motswasele, though, did not care. So Mongwe waited until it was time for Bakwena girls to enter* bojale *(initiation). Then he told all the Bangwato that the Bakwena were stealing their*

WORDS

Bojale is the female initiation into adulthood. The initiation of boys is known as **bogwera.**

cattle and Bangwato men got angry and went into the bojale *camp. As if that was not serious enough a crime, Mongwe and his men then stripped two of Motswasele's wives and sent them to their husband naked. This time Motswasele was very angry and he declared war. His warriors went out and defeated the Bangwato at Kgope Hill. (Kgope Hill is named after the one person who died in this clash.) After being defeated, the Bangwato then went north and became an independent group.*

The history of the Bangwato will be followed in the next chapter.

Meanwhile, the Bakwena continued to be a fairly prosperous group, despite losing people. During the eighteenth century, they lived mainly in modern-day Kgatleng, at Oodi and Mochudi (which is named after the Kwena *kgosi* of that time). In the following years the Bakwena moved closer to Molepolole, where they are based today. During this time they lost a number of battles, to the Bangwaketse, Bakgatla and Babirwa and were divided by a number of internal conflicts. Eventually, around 1807 a ruler known as Motswasele II came to power and unified his people and won some military victories. Despite his generalship, Motswasele made many enemies among his people due to his cruelty and his unwillingness to abide by customary law. He refused to take advice or change his behaviour. So he was executed in 1821 by his own people.

This story is recorded in a play called **Motswasele II**, written by L.D. Raditladi. Read it to get an insight into these historical events.

Batswana life before 1820

By 1820 the Bakwena and Bangwaketse may have had as many as 10 000 people each. Each *morafe* controlled territory in the same area that they do today, as well as other land further to the south. Very few European travellers visited the Batswana before the Difaqane (see Section II on this time of major upheavals) and for that reason there are not many written descriptions of the time. Robert Moffat, a missionary, visited the Bangwaketse in 1822. He wrote:

1. How reliable do you think Source 5 is? Give reasons for your answer.

2. How would you verify this source? Suggest other kinds of sources you could use.

Source 5

The town in which Makabbe (Makaba II) lives is very large. I am not able to judge the number of inhabitants, but the town itself appears to cover at least eight times more ground than any other town I have seen among the Bechuana [a common European term for Batswana].

Their premises and houses are rather on a different plan to other tribes I have seen. The houses are no larger, but built with more taste and comfort. The accuracy with which circles are formed and perpendiculars raised, is quite astonishing. Their outer yards and house floors are very clean and smooth as paper ... The front cattle fold or place where public meetings are held, is a circle of 170 feet diameter... Behind this lies the proper cattle fold, capable of holding many thousand oxen.

However, it is incorrect to think of these early Batswana as living lives of luxury. Only a small portion of any *morafe* owned many cattle. Batswana were continually on the edge of starvation due to the dry climate and generally had very little food.

Batswana at this time lived on a largely vegetarian diet, eating a lot of sorghum porridge and traditional beer (*bojalwa*), vegetables and if they were lucky, they had cattle that provided them with sour milk and cheese (thick/hard *madila*).

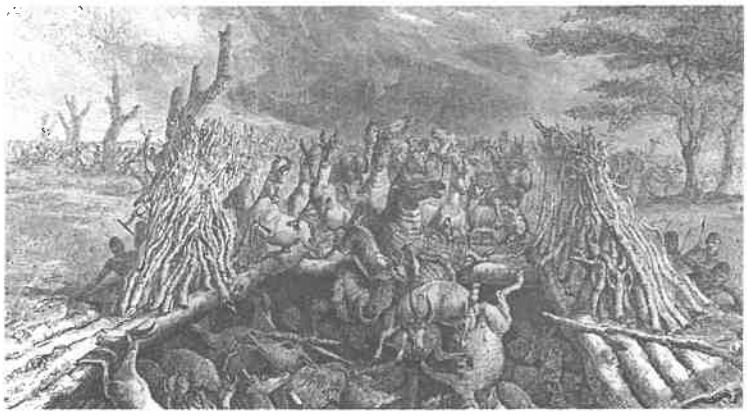
A favourite greeting at that the time was not saying "dumela". Instead they greeted by asking "What are you eating?" (*O ja eng?*) and replying, "Absolutely nothing" (*Sepe sepe*). Discuss how language is used here as a historical source.

Women tended to be heavily involved in agricultural production, mainly growing sorghum and other vegetables. All agriculture had to be done with human labour alone, using the hoe, since there were no ploughs or any kind of animal power. This meant that much less food could be produced than today. And since droughts were always possible, it was difficult to produce enough in wet years to carry people through the years of drought that were common. Usually the wealthiest people were men with more than one wife and thus more women and children raising food in the lands .

Men were more likely to herd cattle or to hunt. It is doubtful that Batswana owned nearly as many cattle as they do today. Gathering wild foods was also extremely important to the Batswana during the winter months and during droughts. Hunting was a more rigorous task than gathering, because Batswana only had spears, traps and clubs with which to kill animals. Without guns, they often organised *matsholo* and tried to drive game into fenced areas where they could spear and club animals to death. Meat was generally dried and made into biltong (*segwapa*). Hunters also saved the fat and used it to smear on their skin or to eat.

Source 6

Sketch of hunting by matsholo



There was also a good deal of trade carried on. During the drier months, traders moved goods by oxen and exchanged them with neighbouring peoples. Batswana obtained copper, iron, and beads from the Bakalanga and Batswapong from

the north. From the south they obtained medicinal herbs, goats and *sebilo* (a costmetic of black lead mixed with fat, used by women and girls).

What have I learnt?

1. Are the Bakgalagadi much different to the Batswana? Explain your answer.
2. What is *sehuba*? Explain three ways in which *sehuba* functioned.
3. Comment on the origins of the term "Batswana", explaining why it is a suitable name for this group.
4. Compare the Batswana before 1820 with those of today with regard to their gender responsibilities, and their social, economic and political situations.

Chapter Four

Northern Botswana before 1820

Northern Botswana is quite distinct from the southern parts. In the north ethnic Batswana do not make up the majority of the area's population. The inhabitants of the north include many Bakalanga, Khoisan, Bakgalagadi, Wayeyi, Hambukushu, Babirwa, Ovaherero and Batswapong.

The Batswana

Three Batswana groups lived in what is today the Central District: the Bakaa, the Bakhurutshe and the Bangwato.

- The first to move there were the **Bakhurutshe**, who split off from the Bahurutshe in South Africa hundreds of years ago. Originally, the Bakhurutshe lived at Shoshong, but later split into two groups that moved to the Boteti and Mahalapye. Today the largest Bakhurutshe settlement is in Tonotla.
- The **Bakaa**, an offshoot of the Barolong, also began living in the Shoshong area long ago. They had many Bakgalagadi *malata* and took tribute from a Bakalanga group, the Batalaote. They remained dominant in the area until the Bangwato arrived.
- The **Bangwato** moved into the Central District from the Kweneng around 1770, settling at Shoshong. For a decade or so they lived on friendly terms with the Bakaa and paid them tribute. But then the two groups fought and the Bangwato drove the Bakaa east towards the Limpopo River. However, the Bangwato did not become that powerful immediately, since they split not long after their victory.

Read through the following case study. Then look back at the other succession dispute you read on the Bangwato in Chapter 3.

1. Can you extend the royal family tree of the Bangwato?
2. a) Show on a diagram how the Bangwato split over the years.
   b) Show the same information on a time line.
3. a) List Kgari I's reforms.
   b) Explain how Kgari's reforms strengthened the Bangwato.
   c) Do you think his reforms were a positive step in the history of Botswana? Give reasons for your answer.

Case study: Succession dispute among the Bangwato

Around 1795 a succession dispute arose during the reign of Kgosi Mathiba, who had several sons by several wives. Mohumagadi's eldest son was Khama (later Khama I and great-grandfather of Khama III), but Mathiba favoured Tawana, son of his first wife but junior to Khama. Mathiba nevertheless designated Tawana as his heir, which led to trouble.

Eventually Tawana and his faction split from the Bangwato and moved north. They settled in the Kgwebe Hills, an old iron-mining centre near Lake Ngami just outside the tsetse fly and malaria zone. His morafe became known as the Batawana, although it was known until the 1840s as the Bampuru. The Bangwato at first let Tawana go. But about 15 years later, they attacked him, only to suffer a major defeat just south of Lake Ngami. Despite the Batawana's victory, they did not live peacefully afterwards. They too had a succession dispute, fought a short civil war and split into two factions.

The Bangwato, on the other hand, soon became a much stronger morafe following the accession of Kgari I to bogosi around 1817. Kgari tried to end succession disputes by increasing the power of the kgosi and reducing the power of

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Mohumagadi is a title of respect given to the *kgosi's* highest-ranking wife.

the royal family. He made the headmen more powerful by Granting them large numbers of cattle. These cattle were herded by Khoisan malata, *who were captured in fairly large numbers by Bangwato* mephato *(age regiments). Headmen, who became known as the* batlhanka-ba-ga-kgosi *(servants of the chief), had their own property rights restricted when they accepted the* kgosi's *cattle. Headmen who failed to support the* kgosi *in disputes, were liable to lose all their property, not just the cattle given to them by the chief. Kgari also sought to increase the power and population of the Bangwato through other measures. He forced all the people to live in the main village. Then he made many Bakhurutshe, Bakalanga and Bakgalagadi become part of his* morafe. *Kgari also forced Khoisan into* bolata. *The effects of his reforms eventually enabled the Bangwato to become a powerful* morafe *after his death.*

1. What are the four Batswana *merafe* in northern Botswana?

2. Which two are most closely related?

The Khoisan (Basarwa)

Of all the inhabitants of Botswana, the Khoisan are those who have lived there for the longest time. Previous chapters described three main Khoisan language groups, the !Xo, Zhu and Khoe.

While the !Xo in southern Botswana and South Africa were almost all exterminated in past centuries, there were no such wars of genocide in northern Botswana. Many Khoisan speakers still live there.

Khoe is the most widely spoken Khoisan language. It is very similar to the language formerly spoken by the Khoikhoi (sometimes called Hottentots) of South Africa, who have since adopted Afrikaans and are called Coloureds. It is probable that the ancestors of the Khoikhoi were still living in northern

Botswana two thousand years ago until they obtained cattle and moved south to the Cape. Some of the Khoe include the Bateti who lived on the Boteti River, the Shua Khoe of the Nata area and the Qanikhwe of the Okavango Delta. Zhu is spoken largely in the western side of Ngamiland, especially north of Ghanzi.

Source 1

Khoisan woman with baby

Khoisan culture

There are many myths and false beliefs about the culture of the Basarwa or Khoisan people.

Myth 1: Khoisan are often thought to be nomads who roam around the Kgalagadi hunting animals.
Fact: The Khoisan have very specific territorial customs although only a small number of them claim individual land ownership. Usually, a family owns land, which is passed on from father to son over generations. The land-owning family is then joined by people who have married into it or by more distant relatives seeking a place to live. In general, about 30 people tend to live on any one piece of land. In the past, Khoisan landowners, both Khoe and Zhu, were called *Xhaihasi*. They controlled large pieces of land, but did not use it all the time. Instead, they would move around to different parts of their territories depending on the time of the year. *Xhaihasi* received the largest share of food and were the political leaders of their groups. During the dry winters, the group lived at a central waterhole, which was sometimes shared with neighbouring families. But after the rains came, the inhabitants moved away from the central waterhole and lived near pools of standing water. Usually they split up into small groups and stayed away from the waterhole for as long

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Xhaihasi is a Khoisan term denoting a leader or the owner of a piece of land.

How do you account for the territorial habits of the Khoisan? Why did they try to stay away from the waterhole "for as long as possible"?

as possible. Finally, they moved back there as winter returned. Khoisan did not leave their own territory very often and, in fact, were likely to be attacked by their neighbours if they trespassed.

Source 2

Do you notice how this man is wearing modern clothes, but has traditional weapons?

Myth 2: Most people think of Khoisan as hunters.
Fact: Most of their food comes from sources other than meat. It is true that Khoisan men are expert hunters. But in the past they were limited in their ability to kill large animals since they only had bows, arrows and spears. Women gathered the majority of the food from wild plants. Also, many Khoe owned livestock and lived on the milk these animals produced.

Myth 3: The Khoisan were not traders.
Fact: Many Khoisan traded in order to obtain grain, particularly from the Bakalanga. Khoisan have been involved in long-distance trade for over 1 500 years. They traded goods such as skins, biltong, ostrich eggshell beads and salt from the Kgalagadi to their neighbours for goods such as metal, grain, beads and tobacco.

1. Which of these myths about the Khoisan people did you believe?
2. How do you think these myths came about?
3. Think of myths about other groups as well. Do you think they are true?

Khoisan are commonly recognised as having exceptional talent in painting, especially on rock faces and in caves. Long ago, Khoisan artists painted highly abstract pictures, in which the eland and giraffe often figure as sacred animals. In these pictures, animals and other symbols were used to represent elements of religious experiences of going into trances, which was done fairly regularly at all night fireside dances. Dancers

entered a trance through the constant repetition of movements and the smoking of dagga. In this state they were able to talk with spirits. Other pictures show social activities and encounters with other people and their cultures.

Many of the Khoisan in northern Botswana maintained their independence until the middle of the nineteenth century. Others, though, became the *malata* of the Batswana long before then. Those groups that kept their independence had their own leaders and traditions. One famous man of Shua Khoe descent is Kgaraxumae, a ruler in the Nata and southern Chobe area who was renowned as a great hunter and a resister of Batswana rule. We learn about him from oral traditions of the Khoisan and Batswana people.

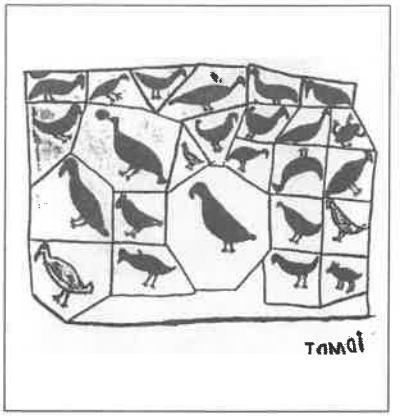
Kgaraxumae is another hero of Botswana, like Mabeleng.

Source 3

Traditional Khoisan art

Source 4

Contemporary Khoisan art



Many Khoisan people still practise body painting and engraving, although there is little tradition of rock painting today. At the Kuru Cultural Project at D'Kar in the Ghanzi area, there is a community of Khoisan artists. Source 4 shows one example of the artworks they have produced.

1. Compare their traditional with their contemporary art.
2. Do you find any similarities?
3. Can you account for any of the changes?

The Bakalanga

The Bakalanga make up of the largest groups in northern Botswana. They form a branch of the Shona speakers and have been living in their present area for over 1 500 years. At one time, the Bakalanga had the largest kingdom in southern Africa.

In Chapter 2, we looked briefly at the kingdom of Butwa. Let us look at it again.

Case study: The kingdom of Butwa

Around 1450, the Bakalanga who lived in the Tati area and further west inside Zimbabwe formed a powerful state known as Butwa. It seems that before that time they had not controlled the gold they produced, but were under the rule of another empire. After 1450, Butwa became a huge kingdom. The capital of Butwa was Khami, where about 7 000 people lived, a very large population for that time.

Source 5

During their years of power the Bakalanga had a vast trading network stretching from the Makgadikgadi salt pans, where they got copper and salt, all the way to the Indian Ocean. Traders from Butwa sent gold and other products along the Limpopo River to be sold to the Europeans and Asians at the Indian Ocean. They even traded in southern Botswana, selling goods among the Bakwena and Bangwaketse.

Because it was a huge and prosperous kingdom, Butwa it attracted large numbers of settlers of various origins, many of whom adopted Bakalanga culture. Due to the nature of their history, the Bakalanga are really a collection of many different groups of people.

Until the 1680s, the King of Butwa, called the *Mambo*, came from a family known as the Chibundule (Torwa). Those Bakalanga in Botswana who were associated with the original Butwa kingdom are called the Balilima. In the 1680s another group of Bakalanga entered the area, led by the Nichasike (Rozwi) family. This group revolted against the Torwa successfully and by 1700 had formed a new group called Banyayi, which ruled over Butwa. Among descendants of the

Nichasike were the Mengwe clan, who became the most senior of the Bakalanga groups. Because of them, the north east region of Botswana, as well as adjacent areas of Zimbabwe, became known as Bulikine gwa Mengwe. Both the Mengwe and Nichasike see themselves as Bakalanga Dumbu (pure Bakalanga).

Other immigrants were Bapedi and Babirwa who had lived south of the Limpopo.

Though the Bakalanga were a powerful and independent group before 1840, they later came to be dominated by the Amandebele and Bangwato. We will learn more about this in Chapter 6.

Other peoples of the Central District

Apart from the Batswana, Khoisan and Bakalanga, several other large groups lived inside what is today the Central District.

The Batalaote

The Batalaote were originally Bakalanga, but split off from their Banyayi relatives hundreds of years ago. After Dalaunde (called Ntalaote by Batswana), the son of the *Mambo*, argued with his older brother, he moved with his followers into the Shoshong area. There they adopted the Setswana language. By the year 1800, the Batalaote were closely connected with the Bangwato, among whom they lived.

The Batswapong

The Batswapong are a diverse group of people living in the Tswapong Hills. Like the Batswana, they are said to have originated in South Africa. Some were originally Bapedi and others South African Amandebele. All of the Batswapong lived in a scattered way, divided up among various small villages.

Originally, these villages each had their own leader, but early in the nineteenth century, a group of South African Ndebele, led by a man named Malete, conquered the area. (For this reason, the Batswapong are sometimes called Bamalete, but they have no connection with the people who live in the Ramotswa area). Because there is a lot of iron ore in the Tswapong Hills, a number of skilled ironworkers have always lived there. They traded their iron goods as far south as the Kweneng.

The Baphaleng

A large number of Baphaleng live in the Central District and they are of Bakgalagadi origin.

The Baphaleng are the descendants of the Bakgwatlheng who fled from the Bakwena and went to live in the Shoshong area. We learnt about this in Chapter 3.

They were independent for some time. Eventually the Bangwato defeated them a little before 1800.

Peoples of Ngamiland

The Wayeyi (Bayeyi)

Ngamiland's largest ethnic group are the Wayeyi, who migrated to Ngamiland from southern Zambia hundreds of years ago. The Wayeyi were primarily fishermen who travelled around the Okavango Delta in canoes they called *mekoro*.

Since the Wayeyi lived in scattered communities over a wide area, they did not have strong rulers. They did have a *kgosi* who was supposed to be the head of the entire group, but he never had substantial power. In fact, the Wayeyi appear to have avoided warfare at all costs, preferring to live peacefully with the Khoe fishermen who also lived in the Okavango Delta.

The Wayeyi did not live by fishing alone. They also produced a lot of food by planting gardens on the islands and riverbanks of the Okavango Delta. Like the other people of Botswana, they were expert hunters. The Wayeyi specialised in trapping hippopotami. Regarding trade, the Wayeyi sold fish, grain and metal to the Khoisan. They also sent goods to Angola and obtained beads, cloth and other goods in return.

Source 6

Wayeyi chief installed

Gumare: The installation of the new Wayeyi chief, the first such installation in over 50 years, went ahead as planned on 24 April 1999, despite an apparent government boycott of the historic event.

Calvin Diile Kamanako I hails from Motopi in the Central District. He is a self-employed businessman in Gaborone and is now the recognised leader of the Wayeyi after a peaceful ceremony in the delta village of Gumare. The last such installation was held in Maun in 1948.

The ceremony was attended by 1 300 people. Motsamai Mpho, President of the Freedom Party, commented: "According to government, we Wayeyi don't exist anyway."The installation made it clear that indeed the approximately 37 000 Wayeyi in the North West district alone (40 per cent of the total population) do exist and are here to stay.

"Today...is the birth of the Wayeyi," came the announcement amid drawn out ululations from the women. Kamanako's representative, Elisha Mouti then read out a speech: "Not only have the Bayeyi almost lost their language but their culture has nearly been lost as well. The role of the chief is to try and capture the remnants." He said that people without a culture are a people without a future and that the pheno-menon of cultural loss is not only among Batswana but among all African people.

The question now is whether Kgosi Kamanako will be recognised as Paramount Chief and admitted into the House of Chiefs where he can officially represent the Wayeyi.

In the article from *Mmegi/The Reporter* in Source 6, you will read that the Wayeyi people have gained independence and recognition for their community.

Do you agree that *Kgosi* Kamanako should be admitted to the House of Chiefs? Say why or why not.

The Hambukushu

Also living in the Okavango area, in the drier areas to the north of the marshes, were the Hambukushu. In the past, far fewer lived in Botswana than today. Like the Wayeyi, the Hambukushu were split up into a number of small groups, but they had a paramount leader with far more power then that of the Wayeyi chief. By 1800, the Hambukushu were living along the Okavango River up into Angola. They kept cattle, farmed and traded with all sorts of goods and people.

Source 7

One of the craft items produced by the Hambukushu women is the traditional dishukeka *wig. Long ago, as a sign of beauty, Hambukushu women wore their hair quite long, adorned with beads. Pressurised to cut their hair, they began to make and wear wigs, intricately braided with fibres of tree roots, indigenous sisal, and glass beads. Some men have said that they used to recognise their own wives by the distinct sound of the beads on the wigs swishing when the women pounded grain.*

The Bakgalagadi

A fair number of Bakgalagadi in Ngamiland are descended from the Bangologa. Most of them lived in the Kgwebe area near Lake Ngami. The Batawana made most of them *malata* after 1800. In the twentieth century, many Bangologa fled Batawana rule and moved north and lived next to the Hambukushu.

What have I learnt?

1. What is the relationship between the Banyayi and the Balilima?
2. Why were many of northern Botswana's peoples not strong in military terms?
3. Create a table to compare the lifestyles of the members of the Wayeyi, the Khoisan and the Bakalanga in the form of a table.

In the next chapter, we will look at the traditional culture of the people of Botswana.

Chapter Five

Botswana's traditional cultures

What is culture?

Before Europeans came to this country, the people living here had their own way of life and traditional culture. This culture made them different from other groups in the region, such as the Amandebele of Zimbabwe, and the Amaxhosa and the Khoikhoi of South Africa.

This chapter will concentrate on Batswana culture.

WORDS

Culture can be defined as a way of life of any particular group of people. The way in which human beings in any society live is their culture and each society on this planet has its own culture. All societies, for instance, have their own way of running affairs, their own system of medicine and their own way of dealing with outsiders. Because each society has its own culture, we are able to distinguish one society from another.

Leadership

Bakgalagadi and Batswana had leaders called *dikgosi* or chiefs. The *dikgosi* were decisive in shaping political events. Most of the *dikgosi* tried to rule by consensus. In other words, people discussed ideas at length and then the *kgosi* made a decision with which almost everybody agreed. Important matters were usually discussed in private by the *kgosi* and his councillors first and then were taken to the people at a public assembly for further discussion. This public assembly was known as the *kgotla*, which was located next to the *kgosi's* residence. In the old days, a meeting was held every morning at the *kgotla* around a fire. All important decisions went through the councillors and the *kgotla*.

WORDS

The **kgotla** was

1. A meeting place for a ward

2. A meeting for the discussion of matters concerning the *morafe*

3. A court for settling disputes within the group

It was at the main *kgotla* that the *kgosi* tried cases, held public meetings, met all visitors to his land and held important ceremonies. He might also hold special meetings, such as *phuthego*, to which all men in the village were summoned, or *pitso*, to which all male subjects from across the land were only rarely called. Often they settled serious disputes that arose between a *kgosi* and his people. Sometimes new laws were introduced in this way.

The *kgosi*, though, did not control everybody's affairs on his own. His subjects were divided into different wards (*makgotla*), which were led by the headmen and the royal family members (*dikgosana*). These wards were given land that was often far from the central village. Each headman ruled in his *kgotla*, but if a severe dispute or issue arose then it might be brought to the attention of the *kgosi*.

Due to his position, the *kgosi* was treated in a special manner. He was referred to by his subjects according to the totem (*sereto*) of his *morafe*. Among the Bangwato, the *kgosi* was called *Phuti*, while the Bangwaketse and Bakwena referred to their *kgosi* as *Kwena*. The *dikgosi* were also praised by their subjects in a special way and *maboko* (praise songs) were composed that glorified their deeds.

You can read an example of a praise poem later in this chapter.

Dikgosi also wore different clothes from the common people and only they were allowed to wear leopard skins when not in battle. *Dikgosi* were installed into office in elaborate ceremonies, with all their subjects present.

Social organisation of the Batswana

The Batswana were an unusual group in Africa in the sense that the *dikgosi* tried to make all the people live in a central village (*motse*). Many of the subjects would not live there for much of the year, but all were expected to maintain a home in the main village. These villages were often located in a hilly area suitable for defence, and with good water supplies.

Source 1

A kgotla

WORDS

Makgotla are wards which form the residential section of a *morafe*, each with its own *kgotla* and headman.

Dikgosana are the senior members of the royal family and headmen of the *makgotla*.

Source 2

Installation of Chief Linchwe II of Bakgatla in 1963

The three residence system

Most Batswana families tried to maintain three places of residence. They had a home in the *motse*, as well as lands for growing crops (*masimo*) and a cattlepost (*moraka*) to keep their stock. Usually these places were some distance apart and families spent much of their time from November to May at the *masimo*, where they cultivated and harvested crops. If the family had cattle, then the men spent a lot of time at the *moraka*. Since cattle had to be herded all year round, there was always a need for people to look after them. The head of the family and the grandparents, meanwhile, lived in the *motse* for much of the year.

WORDS

The **masimo** refers to the fields or lands.

The **motse** is a *morafe's* village.

The **moraka** is a cattlepost.

The *mafisa* system

Among the Batswana, it was very common for families to work closely with other families. Batswana needed a large number of friends and family in order to be able to survive during difficult periods.

How were such contacts made?

One method was for poor families without cattle to obtain loans from wealthier families. *Mafisa* was a system whereby a wealthy man loaned cattle to a poor man.

The number of cattle loaned out varied a great deal. Sometimes only a few cattle were given away, which the borrower could use for milk or for ploughing. At other times, rich men could give away as many as 30 animals, which would then be herded full-time by the borrower and his sons. In return for herding the *mafisa* cattle, the borrower would be given one female animal a year.

WORDS

Mafisa are cattle loaned from one person to another.

A person who took *mafisa* from another, lost some of his personal independence to the man from whom he borrowed cattle. The owner could come to the borrower's *moraka* and look at the cattle at any time. He could take them away if he

wanted to. Borrowers would also find that they were asked to do other favours for the owner of the cattle. The borrower could be asked to help harvest the owner's crop or perhaps support him in a court case. Sometimes families ended up working closely in this way with each other for many generations.

1. Explain why *mafisa* was so crucial to Batswana.

2. Is *mafisa* still practised today? Try to answer from your own experience. Compare your ideas with those of your classmates.

Marriage and family life

Long ago, marriages did not occur simply because the couple involved were in love. In almost every case, marriage was arranged in order to bring two families closer together. When a man was seen as being old enough to marry, his parents and relatives would look for a suitable partner for him. In some cases, they had already thought about this matter for a long time. When a family decided on an appropriate bride, they would approach her parents and conduct negotiations. Neither of the potential married couple played any part in the talking. If the negotiations succeeded, then the man could visit the woman. She would give him a gourd of water if she accepted him as her husband.

Once the marriage was arranged, it had to be finalised with the payment of bridewealth (*bogadi* or *lobola*). The family of the man would pay a certain number of cattle, goats or sheep to the woman's family. If the woman was from a wealthy or royal family, then perhaps more than 10 cattle would be paid. Women from poor families with little influence accepted *bogadi* of two head of cattle or even goats. This payment did not mean that the woman was being bought. What it symbolised was that the families were being drawn closer together and that they took the marriage seriously. If the couple was to divorce, and there were no children involved, then the *bogadi* would have to be repaid to the man's family. For that reason, both families would put pressure on the married couple to stay together rather than divorce. *Bogadi* also showed that the bride was moving from one family to another. She was obliged to leave her own parents' home and move to the husband's courtyard. If her husband paid *bogadi*, then all her children came under the jurisdiction of her husband's family and *kgotla*, not her own.

WORDS

Bogadi is the institution of bride wealth. The family of the groom gave livestock to the family of the bride. *Bogadi* was required to legitimise a marriage.

Do you agree with the statement that **bogadi** did not mean that women were being bought?

The vast majority of men married only one woman. But perhaps ten percent or so married more than one woman, a practice known as polygamy. Usually only richer men who owned many cattle married a second wife. The reasons for having a second wife varied, but in general it brought a man extra status. When a man married for the second time, his first wife usually retained senior status in the family. Her children would inherit most of the property as well as any position her husband held.

Daughters of wealthy or royal families tended to marry people of similar status. In fact, among the wealthier Batswana, it was extremely common for people to marry their cousins, which was known as *serara*.

Richer people preferred *serara* because, the *bogadi* they paid remained inside their family. All the inheritance would remain in the family too. Many people liked *serara* because the families involved knew each other very well and thus there was a good chance of a successful union. As the Setswana saying goes, "*Di boela sakeng*", meaning the cattle return to the kraal.

Once a wife moved to her husband's residence, she was given her own independent household. This consisted of a house, *masimo*, any cattle or other property that she might own. All these things were owned by her and her children and were completely separate from the property belonging to the other wives.

WORDS

Serara is a term for marriage between two first cousins.

1. Would you like to have a traditional, arranged marriage? Say why or why not.

2. Organise a class debate on the questions of polygamy and *bogadi*.

Religion

All societies have their own way of worshipping a superior being or God.

Before the arrival of Christianity, religion among the Batswana involved communicating with the spirits of their *badimo* (ancestors). The *badimo* were thought to pay close attention to the lives of their living descendants. Batswana therefore tried hard to please them. Through the *badimo* Batswana also prayed to the Supreme Being, whom they called *Modimo wa medimo*, *Modimo wa go tinelela*, *Modimo wa magodimo* (God of gods, the invisible God, the God of the heavens). This pre-Christian *Modimo* was known as "the one without ancestry, having no future or past" (*O sena lotso, ga ona pele le marago*). He was also called by different names, such as *Montshi* (giver), *Modiri* (maker), *Mothei* (founder) and *Motlhodi* (creator). These titles set *Modimo* apart from the *badimo*, ancestral spirits, and *medimo*, or lesser deities. As such, he was the ultimate source of royal authority: *Ntlha ya kgosi e iwa ke Modimo*!

WORDS

The **badimo** are the spirits of the ancestors.

Modimo was always associated with the number 7. The traditional taboo against pointing one's seventh finger at someone is said to be rooted in this fact.

Further evidence of the ancient *Modimo* can be found in pre-Christian prayers and hymns, a number of which have survived. Many share as a common verse: *Medimo e mesha e rapelela Modimo wa kgale* (New gods/spiritual beings, pray for us to the God of old). One early song goes: *Modimo o tle le mahube a bosa le le letsatsi* (O God, come with the dawn of each day).

Source 3

The following pre-Christian prayer was used in times of drought:

Modimo wa borara,	God of my forefathers,
Ke letse ke sa ja,	I lie down hungry,
Ke letse le tlala,	Though others have eaten,
Ba bangwe be jele,	And lie down full.
Ba letse ba kgotse,	Even if it is but a polecat,
Leha e ele montsho,	Or a little rock rabbit,
Le sekomenyana.	
Nka itumela,	I shall rejoice.
Ke bitsa Modimo,	I cry to God,
Borraro namagola.	Father of my ancestors.

Use these hymns and prayers as a starting point for a com-parison of pre-Christian and Christian beliefs. Was the belief in *Modimo* very different from beliefs in the Christian God?

Many associate the name "Modimo" with being "above" (*fa godimo*). But the early missionaries were told that the name was derived from the verb *go dima*, which means to penetrate through something. Maphakela Lekalake, an early Motswana evangelist, once demonstrated this concept by dropping some oil on a piece of blotting paper. Turning the paper over, he showed where the oil had passed through, *go dima*, further noting that in the past, as in the present, "Modimo was he who permeated all things."

The *kgosi* was the centre of religious activities. He was known to be directly descended from the first ancestor of the *morafe*. So he was involved in many religious ceremonies. Also, in times of drought or danger, he would communicate with the *badimo* and ask them to improve the situation.

An important annual ceremony was rainmaking. No person was allowed to plough before it had been completed. Every year when the ploughing time approached, the *kgosi* and his favourite *ngaka* would appeal to the ancestors for rain. They would kill a black cow especially selected for the occasion. Then they would take its blood and mix it with herbs. Finally they would spread the mixture across the countryside with the

branch of a *mosetlha* tree. Rain was then supposed to fall soon. If it did not, it meant that *badimo* were unhappy about something and other measures had to be taken to appease them.

Source 4

Read the following praise poem, written to praise Sekgoma I of the Bangwato:

1. Discuss why you think the *kgosi* was so important in Tswana society.
2. Comment on how a historian can make use of songs, poems and prayers as sources of evidence.

Keseriri-tau saboMmakgama,	He is the lion-maned one of MaKgama,
sakolwane jooMmamkgokong;	the sturdy youth of MaMokgogkong;
gaseke sebeolwa, seasekolwa,	his hair is never shorn, but merely trimmed,
gatwe gorewa gobo ele moroka,	because he is said to be a rainmaker,
gorewa ka ele moroka wapula	he's said to be a maker of rain.
Mogale yoomokokotlo okgapa,	The hero who is very strong,
osekeng akgabaaganagwa kapele.	he is never beaten easily.
Gontse gatwe gokalekwa bokgeme;	There's talk of tackling the bitter man.
olte, otle, boretelela Matebele,	You dare come; he's too much for the Matebele,
boretelela batho babamakoko,	too much for the people of many groups,
babathebe ditona momagetleng.	who carry big shields on their shoulders.

Ordinary people also communicated with the *badimo* to make sure that they were not offended. On important occasions, they would set aside food and drink for the *badimo* to enjoy. Every year, the *kgosi* also gave part of the first crops to the ancestors. Only after that could people prepare food from the harvest. In some ceremonies, cattle (either all white or all black) were sacrificed to the *badimo*.

Source 5

The Rainmaker

Bongaka and *boloi* - traditional medicine and sorcery

Batswana, like many other people of their time, believed that unfortunate events were not caused by chance. Instead, they often felt that misfortune was caused by sorcery (*boloi*). They believed, for instance, that if a person got sick or died, then that person's enemies had caused the problem through the use of *boloi*. This system of beliefs was different from that which was beginning to emerge in Europe, in which fate, chance and random occurrence were thought to be important.

People who had the power to use witchcraft were called *baloi*. They used herbs and other ingredients to hurt other people. *Baloi* were said to possess special powers. Some were thought to be able to enter houses at night and then to turn their enemies into animals (which they rode around on). At other times, *baloi* might try to poison their enemies or aim lightning at them. Most *dikgosi* did not allow the use of *boloi*. People who were suspected of using it were put on trial. If found guilty, they were liable to be put to death.

WORDS

Baloi are people who use **boloi**, or sorcery, where supernatural means are used to cause harm.

The traditional doctors (*dingaka*) were different from the *baloi* in that they used their powers to heal. Each *ngaka* tended to have a speciality and attracted a separate range of customers. Some were skilled at curing the sick, treating them with herbs they grew or collected in the bush. Other *dingaka* were skilled at "throwing the bones" (spilling a set of small bones on the ground and then interpreting the way they fell). In doing so, they tried to help solve a person's problems. For instance, a *ngaka* could help a sick man identify who was using *boloi* against him and then come up with a cure. Another group of *dingaka* was skilled at protecting and curing cattle and livestock.

WORDS

Dingaka are traditional doctors. They use **bongaka** or traditional medicine to treat medical and witchcraft cases, both on humans and animals.

The range of activities in which *baloi* and *dingaka* took part was very large. In all the large villages there were a number of them, who lived by charging fees for their services. Usually they charged a goat, but if they cured a serious illness, they would ask for a cow. Someone who wanted a *moloi* to harm an enemy, paid a much higher price than that. Successful

dingaka tended to be among the most prosperous citizens of any *morafe*, even though they were not from the royal family.

Source 6

Ngaka throwing the bones

Education

In all societies, education is used to train young people.

Long ago, the Batswana had a very rigid system of education, although there were no classrooms then. Traditionally, Batswana received formal training during initiation ceremonies and informal training from parents, relatives and elders. Unless a man had received this education, he was not allowed to take part in public affairs. Uneducated women, likewise, could not marry and start families. Just as important was the fact that uneducated people were regarded as children, no matter how old they were. To be taken seriously, then, a person had to be educated.

Batswana education tended to promote very conservative ideals. In other words, children were encouraged to keep things the way they were. Adults were expected to act in the same manner as their elders and ancestors, the *badimo*, had done. If not, the *badimo* would be upset and they would cause things to go wrong in the *morafe*. People were also taught to

respect the *kgosi*'s authority and not to disturb the political order.

Do you agree that it is better to keep things the way they are, or to change?

Informal training

All Batswana children received informal training from a young age. Children were taught practical skills by their parents. Mothers taught their daughters various household duties such as cooking and fetching water and wood. Girls were taught how to build houses, how to keep them clean and how to decorate them. At the lands they learned to grow and harvest crops and to prepare them for eating. In some families, basket making or pottery was also taught.

Source 7

Women building a house

Boys learned from their fathers and older boys. Hunting, tending cattle, clearing fields, carpentry, tanning and sewing were among the skills they acquired. Seven-year-olds were sent to look after goats and calves and by the age of 10, they usually looked after cattle. Herding cattle was a job with much responsibility. Boys were situated far from home at a *moraka* and worked by themselves for much of the day. Herd boys were always on the lookout for good grazing land and, during the driest part of the year, they had to dig for the water in the beds of streams. Boys were disciplined to do a good job. If a boy did not put much effort into herding cattle or was found sitting far away from the animals, he could be beaten by any adult who walked by. Boys who let cattle go astray could expect to be severely punished.

Elders usually tried to educate the children by story telling and riddles. This exercise often took place in the evenings around a fire. These stories were often about animals, which were acting in ways similar to adults. They always had a lesson to them and would warn children never to be foolish. Riddles challenged youngsters to use their intellect.

One riddle asked: "What sinks and then emerges?" The answer is a needle! Another riddle told by the Batswana people was: You have a mouse, a cat and seeds. You want to take them across the river one at a time. Which would you take first?

Source 8

1. Do you know any riddles of this kind?
2. Have a story-telling session in class, sharing all the riddles and stories you learnt as children.
3. Do you think telling stories and riddles is an important part of a child's education? Give reasons for your answer.

Formal education

Batswana formal education, known as initiation, was a far more serious affair than the telling of stories around fires. During initiation, children were transformed into adults through intensive instruction, corporal punishment, seclusion and denial of comfort. Initiation ceremonies for boys were known as *bogwera*, while those for girls were called *bojale*. These ceremonies occurred every five to ten years and all people were expected to participate. Most of the participants were aged around 13 to 18.

Bogwera or male initiation

Bogwera was a harsh ordeal. All the boys would be sent off into the bush during the winter, where they could not be visited except by the people in charge of the ceremony. Then they went through a three-stage course:

- First of all, the boys (*magwane*) were circumcised, which was an extremely painful and dangerous operation.
- Once they had recovered from their wounds, which took several days, the *magwane* then went through physical training. At this time they were moulded together into a fighting regiment (*mophato*). They were taught military tactics and also to handle weapons. Like soldiers everywhere, they had to complete long marches and other tests of their endurance and courage. Hunting was thought to be an excellent form of learning for soldiers. Every day the *magwane* would be expected to fight and conduct other duties together for the rest of their lives.
- During the final part of *bogwera*, the *magwane* were taught the laws governing Tswana society. They learned law, custom and the historical traditions of their *morafe*, as well as the duties of the *kgosi*, headmen and ordinary citizens. In addition, the young men were taught the responsibilities of being husbands and heads of families.

WORDS

Bogwera is the male initiation into adulthood.

Magwane are the boys undergoing bogwera.

A **mophato** is a group of men or women initiated together that is expected to perform public duties. Members of a men's *mophato* fought side by side in wartime.

Undergoing *bogwera* was a painful process. Not only was circumcision painful, but military training was long and arduous. Constant beatings were used to teach the *magwane* their lessons; all of them returned home with scarred backs. They were denied normal amounts of food and sleep. In the morning, they would be awakened by having cold water thrown on them. Due to this training, some *magwane* actually died during the process. In fact, the organisers of the ceremony always ensured that one person died, as a sacrifice to the *badimo*.

Once the process was finished, the *magwane* were presented to the *kgosi*, who gave the new *mophato* a name. *Maletamotse* (those who guard the village), for instance, is the

name of a *mophato* in several *merafe*. *Merafe* were always led by the senior royal family member in the regiment, often a son or nephew of the *kgosi*. He and his men could be called upon any time by the *dikgosi* to defend the *morafe* or to perform public tasks such as hunting dangerous animals, rounding up stray cattle or destroying locusts.

***Bojale* or female initiation**

Girls' initiation ceremonies were usually held at the same time as the boys' and were known as *bojale*. This ceremony took place far from the village in a private location. Initiation for girls was not designed to be as rigorous as it was for boys. For example, there was no equivalent for circumcision and girls were not expected to go hunting or to learn military tactics.

Girls undergoing initiation were smeared all over with white clay and given clothes made out of reeds. In addition, they carried large sticks with which they could beat anyone who came near them.

The girls were not well-fed at this time and they did quite a lot of walking. But the main aspect of their education was not physical. They were taught how to be good wives and mothers. Like the boys, they learned the laws and customs of the *morafe* and what duties they were expected to perform as adult citizens. When, after some six weeks, the initiation was finished, they were also presented to the *kgosi* and the *mophato* was given a name. From then on, for the rest of their lives, the *mophato* could be called on to perform public duties such as building houses for the *kgosi*, preparing a feast or any other such thing.

Source 9

Motlhaping girl initiate

Once boys and girls had been initiated they were full citizens. As such, they were allowed to marry and go to court as an adult. Batswana felt that initiation taught youngsters all the things they needed to know in order to be useful to society.

Women in traditional society

Traditionally women in Botswana occupied an inferior position to men. This can be seen in the way that men were in control of making public decisions.

Only men were allowed to take part in political affairs. Women were not supposed to be public officials such as the *kgosi* or an advisor to the *kgosi*, nor were they allowed to go to *kgotla*, where all political and legal matters were decided, unless they were giving evidence in a court case. Women were expected to rely upon their fathers, brothers or husbands if they wanted any legal matter to be taken up.

Socially, women were expected to perform far more than half of all manual work done in the *morafe*. Women and their daughters were expected to perform all the housework, such as cooking, cleaning, fetching water and firewood and caring for children. Men rarely did these things. In addition, women performed almost all the agricultural work and the gathering of wild foods, while men looked after cattle and hunted. It was agriculture and food gathering that provided families with the majority of food, not cattle or game meat.

An indication of a woman's position can be seen through laws relating to cattle ownership. The majority of cattle were owned by men. When a man died, his cattle were then divided up into shares, with the majority going to his eldest son. His younger sons got smaller shares, while his daughters could usually expect one or two beasts at most. It was men who controlled almost all of the inheritance (*boswa*). A woman did not gain any share of *bogadi* that came into her family. When a woman was married, the *bogadi* that was paid went to her father and his brothers only. Through such laws as these, women were traditionally denied the means to obtain cattle. Women thus remained dependent upon men, who controlled the family wealth.

Organise a debate on the traditional role of Batswana women. Use these questions as a starting point.

1. Do you think it was right for women to occupy an inferior position?

2. Do you think the role of women has changed? Say why or why not. If you think it has, say how.

3. Do you think the role of women still needs to change?

Other cultures in Botswana

A big difference between the Batswana and the other *merafe* is that the Batswana lived in much larger groups. People like the Wayeyi and Batswapong were scattered so they tended not to have a strong *kgosi*. Instead, they had many local rulers whose power extended over a small area and who were quite weak. Because their numbers were small, these groups did not divide themselves up into *makgotla* as did the Batswana.

These *merafe* were, however, also similar to the Batswana in many ways. They practised *bogadi*, traditional medicine and educated their children through initiation and circumcision. They also believed in sorcery, rainmaking and communicating with ancestors.

Mwali religion and Hambukushu rainmaking

The Bakalanga and Batswapong had a different religion from the Batswana. The Mwali religion was practised in eastern Botswana as well as in neighbouring parts of Zimbabwe and South Africa by a wide variety of people. This religion originated within the Butwa empire many centuries ago and then spread into other areas. The Bakalanga and others believed in a powerful being named Mwali, the son of God, with whom they communicated in times of need. Such help was needed because the Bakalanga believed that bad luck, drought or illness were either brought by angry *midzimu* (divinities) or could be treated with the assistance of *midzimu*. The Bakalanga communicated with Mwali through priests and priestesses who lived in remote and sacred places, such as caves.

To communicate with Mwali, Bakalanga had to visit the *nganga* (priest), bringing big pots of traditional beer and a lot of food. The priest would then offer the food to Mwali, who would drink the beer and leave only foam inside the pots. Once the sacrifice was given, the priest would ask Mwali for aid or guidance. In the evening, after the sacrifice had been given, *nganga* would have another ceremony in which they would dance barefoot through a fire in public ceremony. If they succeeded, it showed that Mwali had heard the people

and would get rid of the evil spirits that had been bringing misfortune.

Another group with a separate religious tradition was the Hambukushu, who lived in the northern part of Ngamiland. The rulers of the Hambukushu claimed to control all the waters that flowed down the Okavango River and were thought to be the area's best rainmakers. Other leaders from Zambia and Namibia, as well as Botswana, would send the Hambukushu ruler cattle every year so that he would make rain come and keep the rivers flowing. Part of the Hambukushu ruler's power came from the fact that for part of the year, he lived by himself in the bush, separate from his people. He would only emerge from his seclusion once rains had fallen.

Khoisan culture

We have already looked at the Khoisan in earlier chapters.

Khoisan differed depending on where they lived. Some owned cattle and livestock, while others relied more on hunting and foraging. A lot of Khoisan had *dikgosi*, while some smaller groups did not have any formal leader. Most of the Basarwa conducted initiation ceremonies for boys and believed in a similar system of religious beliefs to that of Batswana.

The Khoisan were quite distinct from Batswana in the way they put pressure on each of their friends and relatives to share their food and belongings. For instance, among the Zhu, a custom known as *hxaro* existed, in which people exchanged belongings. So Zhu could borrow things from relatives or friends when they needed them. In return, they knew that at some point in the future they would be expected to give a gift to the person from whom they had borrowed something. This custom allowed Zhu to be confident that in times of drought or poverty they would be able to turn to someone for help. Some engaged in *hxaro* with several dozen people at a time for that reason.

WORDS

Hxaro is a Sesarwa institution of reciprocal gift giving.

Another feature of Khoisan life quite different from that of the Batswana was their system of medicine. Besides having their own traditional doctors to heal them when a person got sick, a trance dance was often held. During these ceremonies, people gathered around a fire and began singing. A group of dancers moved around in a circle. After moving around and pounding their feet for some time, usually one or more of the dancers would enter a trance and attempt to cure the sick person. These dancers were not *dingaka*, they were just ordinary people. It was believed that all people keep a healing substance called *n/um* in their stomachs and that dancing could bring this substance up into their heads. Once the *n/um* had arrived in the head, the dancer would rub sweat all over the sick person and make a series of strange moaning sounds. It was believed that the evil spirit that had caused the disease would then go away.

The challenge to Batswana culture

During the nineteenth century, Europeans began to interact with the peoples of Botswana. Before Botswana became a Protectorate, Batswana dealt regularly with two groups of Europeans. These were the missionaries and the traders. Both groups had a great deal to do with changing Batswana culture.

WORDS

Missionaries are people who spread their religion in other countries.

In the case of Botswana, the early missionaries were British and German. They came to Botswana to spread Christianity. The most prominent group was the London Missionary Society (LMS). Missionaries were important in the nineteenth century because they tried to change the way in which the Batswana thought about life. They wanted to get rid of many traditional customs. They told the Batswana that if they practised these things, they would be sinning against God and would spend their afterlives in a place called Hell. They wanted to replace Tswana customs with practices based upon the laws of God, found in the Bible.

Find some sources both in this book and elsewhere to support the argument that the missionaries tried to change Batswana culture.

Another group who made a lasting impact on the Batswana way of life was the traders. These were businessmen who came to Botswana to exchange products which they had brought with them for things the Batswana had. Traders did not care

how the Batswana thought or acted, but came to Botswana in order to make money. Some of them also wanted to hunt or have some adventure in what was for them a strange and distant land. Most traders came to Botswana from South Africa, which was where they returned to sell the goods that they had acquired.

Traders changed the way in which the Batswana behaved for one main reason. They brought items that the Batswana had never had before and wished to obtain. These included guns, cloth, new kinds of food, wagons and horses. Because the traders did not want sorghum and cattle, Batswana were forced to change their lifestyle in order to produce things the traders wanted.

In some ways, the traders and missionaries were closely tied together. For instance, many missionaries, such as David Livingstone and Robert Moffat, also traded with the Batswana. In cases where missionaries established stations in *merafe* and did not trade, traders were quick to follow them because the *kgosi* was likely to favour the presence of whites. Meanwhile, the Batswana *dikgosi* often invited missionaries to live among their people as a way of promoting trade.

Missionaries and traders will appear in many later chapters. They played an important role in nineteenth century Botswana.

What have I learnt?

1. Draw up a table to compare the cultures of the different groups living in Botswana. Include aspects such as leadership, medicine, and the role of women.
2. What kinds of sources could be used to do research on culture in Botswana?
3. Compare the current culture you experience with traditional Batswana culture.

Chapter Six

Time of tumult - The Difaqane

No period in Botswana's history has been more destructive than the Difaqane, which is also known as the Mfecane. What happened during this tumultuous time?

During the 1820s and 1830s two groups of foreign invaders, the Bakololo and Amandebele, attacked **merafe** throughout the country, seizing people and livestock. Some communities were completely ruined, while others were weakened and scattered. To make matters worse, famine and internal conflicts also occurred, as local groups turned on one another to survive.

WORDS

The **Difaqane** was an era of wars in southern Africa between approximately 1815 and 1840. The Difaqane did not only happen in Botswana, but also in eastern and central as well as southern Africa. Thus historians use different terms for this upsurge in violence that occurred during the early decades of the nineteenth century. The Sesotho word **Difaqane** and the Isixhosa word **Mfecane** are commonly translated as expressions for the crushing sound made by grinding stones. Difaqane and Mfecane thus refer to a "time of crushing".

In the past, Batswana had other names for the period. Oral traditions speak of a *time of tumult*. Some elders, when referring to the Bakololo as well as Amandebele, speak of *Matebele invasions*. Another indigenous term is the *time of the black ants* (*ditshoswane tse dintshonyana*). The last term comes from a tradition of the Bakwena.

This story about ants can be compared to Shaka Zulu's prophesy: "The swallows are coming." He was refering to the Boers. Try to find out more about this story and report your findings to the class.

Source 1

In the years just before the invasions, **Kgosi** Motswasele II, who is remembered as a powerful but abusive ruler, governed the Bakwena. His misrule led some of his subjects to plot his execution. Before he was beheaded, Motswasele is said to have warned that: "If I am killed my father's ants will come to avenge me." He is further said to have prophesied that the countryside would first be overrun by "black ants" and later by "white ants" (**ditshoswane tse ditshweunyana**). Batswana remembered the slain **kgosi's** prophecy. Later most identified the black ants as being the Bakololo and Amandebele and the

What caused the time of tumult?

Historians do not agree about the origins of the Difaqane. A number of explanations have been offered. It is likely that several factors contributed to its outbreak. Until recently, experts assumed that the Difaqane began among the Northern Nguni of KwaZulu-Natal, the people we know today as Amazulu. But recent studies have focused attention on events elsewhere in southern Africa, which also contributed to the time of tumult.

Events in KwaZulu-Natal

Prior to the Difaqane, the Northern Nguni lived in small groups, which were sometimes loosely united into larger confederations. After 1810, these groups fought one another for control of KwaZulu-Natal in an increasingly bloody series of wars. It is uncertain why these wars broke out. Some of the reasons suggested are:

- The growth of the region's human and cattle population may have led to greater competition for land, especially good grazing land.
- The outbreak of a period of prolonged drought, around 1800-1810, may also have increased competition for food and cattle.
- This drought was made more severe by a growing dependency on maize, which had been introduced from the Americas. Maize is less drought resistant than African grains such as sorghum.
- Another probable cause was competition over trade routes to the Portuguese ports in Mozambique. There was also competition over products for trade, such as ivory. Ivory trading could have encouraged war through the formation of large, armed hunting parties, which competed for the remaining elephant herds. As hunters began to acquire guns in exchange for their ivory, the region became more insecure.
- The spread of slave trading has always been connected with increased violence. In the past, people were generally enslaved by being captured in wars. Some suggest that slavers may have encouraged the Difaqane. The Difaqane coincided with the export of thousands of slaves from Delagoa Bay (now called Maputo) in southern Mozambique. Perhaps Northern Nguni communities combined into stronger states with larger armies in order to defend themselves from slave traders. This would be an example of defensive state building.

We will learn more about the concept of state building later in this book.

- Still another factor that contributed to the Difaqane was the military talents and ambitions of the rulers such as Dingiswayo, Sobhuza, Zwide and Shaka. The greatest of these was the Amazulu leader Shaka who, between 1818 and 1828, conquered most of KwaZulu-Natal. Rather than live under Shaka, some groups fled from KwaZulu-Natal, usually without property or food. To survive, these same refugees often fought against other groups whom they encountered. In this way, they carried the death and destruction of Shaka's wars to other parts of Africa. The Amandebele were one such group.

Source 2

Shaka, King of the Zulu, c. 1825. This is the only known portrait of Shaka, the great Amazulu leader

Slave trading along the Orange River

Events outside of KwaZulu-Natal also contributed to the Difaqane.

Like the Portuguese in Mozambique, the people in the British-ruled Cape Colony were eager to acquire slaves. In 1790, there were 25 000 slaves living in the Cape Colony. They had been imported mainly from Asia, but also parts of Africa. These slaves, along with another 20 000 indigenous Khoe, worked without pay primarily for the 22 000 Boers.

In 1807, the British banned the further import of overseas slaves into the Cape Colony. Some Boers then began to buy women and children from across the Orange River, which then formed the Cape Colony's northern border. These women and children were often captured in raids carried out by Griqua and Korannas, both Coloured groups of mixed European and Khoe descent who had acquired guns and horses. Most of the captives were either Basotho or southern Batswana, such as the Batlhaping, though many Khoisan speakers were also captured. There are written eyewitness accounts of this trade. For example a missionary writing in 1829 noted:

Source 3

Amongst the Griquas and Bergenaars [a breakaway Griqua group], who are in considerable connection with the Cape, slaves obtained by barter or by capture from Bootchnuanas [Batswana] and Bushmen [Khoisan], are a common article of saleable property.

1. Look at the two pieces of evidence quoted in Sources 3 and 4. For each, say:

a) What kind of evidence is this?
b) How reliable do you think this evidence is?
c) What biases are there in this piece of evidence? Quote to support your answer.
d) How would you verify this evidence? Suggest other sources you could use.

2. Write a brief paragraph containing the facts you can find in these two sources.

Source 4

In 1834, a newspaper, *The Grahamstown Journal*, reported:

> Amongst the Basotho, cattle have now became scarce, and commandos do now as usual go out in search of them so much as of children, whom they carry off in great number and dispose of them to farmers, who readily give a horse or inferior gun for each.

In Chapter 3, you looked at the system of **bolata** in Botswana. Can you compare **bolata** to the system of slave trading described here?

Basotho and southern Batswana, like the people of KwaZulu-Natal, began to engage in defensive state building to defend themselves against slavers. Some *merafe* also began to acquire guns, which greatly increased their ability to defend themselves. The most successful of these states was Moshoeshoe's Kingdom of Lesotho.

Source 5

Moshoeshoe was the founder of the Basotho nation. He was well known For his courage and diplomacy

Other communities fled north to escape the effects of the slaves. The Bakololo belong to this category.

Communities in Botswana were not directly affected by slavers from either the Cape Colony or Mozambique. Neither were they involved in KwaZulu-Natal's warfare. How then did the Difaqane come to affect them?

The refugees from these conflicts to the south and east ultimately affected every corner of Botswana, as we may follow through the actions of the Bakololo and the Amandebele.

Both the Bakololo and the Amandebele arrived in Botswana as powerful, mobile military groups. Each was led by a talented warrior, who built up his following through the assimilation of defeated peoples.

The Bakololo of Sebetwane

During the Difaqane, the Bakololo (often referred to as Makololo) emerged as fierce raiders under the leadership of Sebetwane. Between 1823 and 1840 they attacked *merafe* as they moved through eastern and into northern Botswana. Sebetwane began his career as the *kgosi* of a small southern Batswana *morafe*, the Bafokeng-ba-ga-Patsa. Later he called his followers the Bakololo, in honour of his senior wife whose extended family was Kolo. In 1822, the Ba-ga-Patsa lost their cattle. Sebetwane is said to have then told his people:

Source 6

My masters, you see that the world is collapsing. We shall be eaten up one by one. Our fathers taught us peace means prosperity, but today there is no peace, no prosperity! Let us march!

Sebetwane then joined up with another southern Batswana group, the Bataung, in 1823. Together the two *merafe* raided the Bahurutshe, Barolong, Batlokwa and Bangwaketse. They defeated the Bahurutshe in a battle near Zeerust, while the Barolong and Batlokwa fled for safety. The latter group moved north to join the Bangwato. Only the Bangwaketse, under the strong leadership of Makaba II, were able to repulse the attackers.

In 1824, the Bakololo raided *merafe* further to the east. Among their victims were the Bakgatla-ba-ga-Kgafela, then living in what is now the Northern Province under the regent Motlotle who was known for his cruelty. As the Bakololo approached, Motlotle fled westwards towards Botswana, where he was killed by his own people.

Source 7

Ratmagole, a Mokololo veteran posing in an old war dress at Tsau in 1908. Except for the headdress, his outfit is the same as those worn by the Bakwena, Bangwato and Bangwaketse warriors during the Difaqane

Source 8

Here is a trader's description of Bangwaketse warriors in 1826:

Their dress consisted of a panther's [leopard/nkwe] hide thrown carelessly over their shoulders; a lynx's [thwane] skin suspended round their neck and cut in oval form, covered the lower part of the body. A white tuft of goat's hair made in the shape of the sun and a plume of ostrich feathers crowned their head which, from the way they were covered with sebilo and fat, a good deal resembled a steel helmet when exposed to the rays of the sun. Each had a shield of white ox-hide, generally with a black or brown spot in the middle, to which were fastened 3 to 6 assegais. It is suspended from the Chacka [tshaka] or battleaxe which they carry on their left shoulders and dangles at their backs, the shafts of the assegais being upwards and the blades fixed in the pocket of the bottom of the shield.

Source 9

"Bechuana warrior" by G.H. Ford. This dress is typical of southern Botswana groups such as Barolong And Bathlaping

Contrast the war dress of southern Batswana with that of the northern Batswana, using Sources 7, 8 and 9.

How to use pictures as a source of information

You have already made use of pictures, including photos and paintings, as a source of historical evidence. Here are some more points to bear in mind when working with pictures as evidence:

- Paintings do not always depict the real world, as photographs can. Nevertheless, some paintings are historically accurate in recording people and events.
- Paintings can tell you something about the atmosphere the artist experienced.
- Paintings can also tell you what the artist thought, through details and exaggerations.
- Photographs can also be unrealistic, especially if the artist takes only a small part of a bigger picture, or poses the photograph.
- Always ask who produced the artwork, when the artwork was produced and why it was produced. The artwork is always produced from a point of view.
- Then look at the people in the picture. What are they doing? What's going on? What do you think the people are thinking?
- What is outside the frame of the painting or photograph?

The Bakololo again invaded Botswana in 1825 because of the arrival of the more powerful Amandebele. The Bakololo initially moved into Kweneng, where the Bakwena had been divided since Motswasele II's assassination. One of the *kgosi's* assassins, Moruakgomo, led one section of the *morafe*. Another faction, which included Motswasele's young heir, Sechele, had moved to Gammangwato. There the Bangwato *Kgosi* Kgari treated Sechele like a son. According to some accounts, Kgari encouraged Sebetwane to attack Moruakgomo on Sechele's behalf. At any rate, Sebetwane drove Moruakgomo out of his stronghold at Dithubaruba.

Early in 1826, Moruakgomo's Bakwena joined forces with the Bangwaketse and their allies the Bahurutshe and Bakgatla-ba-ga Mmanaana. Makaba II led this combined force in a great battle against Sebetwane at Losabanyana. According to some accounts, Makaba's son, Sebego, betrayed Makaba by staying out of the battle. Makaba was slain. For the Bakololo, it was a costly victory. Sebetwane was seriously wounded in the chest. He recovered, but a quarter century later, the same wound reopened, causing his death.

Source 10

Sechele in 1865

After Makaba's death, the Bangwaketse, like the Bakwena, were divided. In August 1826 the largest faction, led by Sebego, launched a surprise dawn attack on the Bakololo at Dithubaruba. Sebego spoke to his troops before the attack:

Source 11

The Bakololo are numerous as the locusts of the field, but let us not discourage you, for the Bangwaketse have hearts of lions! Yes, the Bangwaketse alone have stemmed the torrent of the Bakololo, which swept from the face of the earth our once-powerful neighbours, the Bahurutse and Bakwena, whose very names are now almost forgotten. Let them no more enter the territories of Moleta [an early Mon-gwaketse kgosi] where they butchered my renowned father Makaba. Yes, his glorious name must rouse our hearts to vengeance! Revenge! Revenge! Revenge!

Sebego's forces were completely successful and the Bakololo were forced to flee eastward. During the attack, Batswana observed the importance of firearms in battle. Two white traders assisted Sebego with their muskets. This incident encouraged others to trade for guns.

The Bakololo move north

The Bakololo recuperated at Mochudi during the 1826-27 planting season. Sebetwane then decided to advance into the Central District. There he took cattle and captives from nearly every community living south of the Motloutse River. After suffering a Bakololo raid, the Bangwato tried to rebuild their herds by invading the Bakalanga Banyayi (Butwa) Kingdom north of the Motloutse. They reached as far as the Matopos, where they were ambushed by the Bakalanga. Kgari and about half of his men were killed. During this battle, Batswana once more witnessed the power of guns: the Bakalanga had acquired muskets from the Portuguese traders in Angola.

In 1829, the surviving Bangwato were once more attacked. The Bakololo took more captives, including the exiled Sechele and Kgari's son, Sekgoma. Both were eventually released. During their captivity the two princes learned to appreciate Sebetwane's leadership qualities.

Faced with continued local resistance, in 1830, Sebetwane decided to move further north into the Boteti region. There, after losing many cattle in the arid central Kgalagadi, he was able to replenish his herds by stealing from the Deti-Khoe (Bateti), who were then known for their long-horned cattle. In 1834 Sebetwane moved his forces into Ngamiland. The Batawana fled into the Okavango and Chobe swamps, where they joined the Wayeyi and Bekuhane (Basubiya) in holding out against the invaders. Sebetwane then pushed westwards towards the Atlantic, hoping to find white men who could sell him guns. But, in Namibia, he was turned back by Ovaherero and Naro-Khoe archers who made effective use of poisoned arrows.

After this defeat, Sebetwane returned to Ngamiland. This time he encountered and defeated the Batawana. Most of the Batawana were then temporarily reduced to the status of

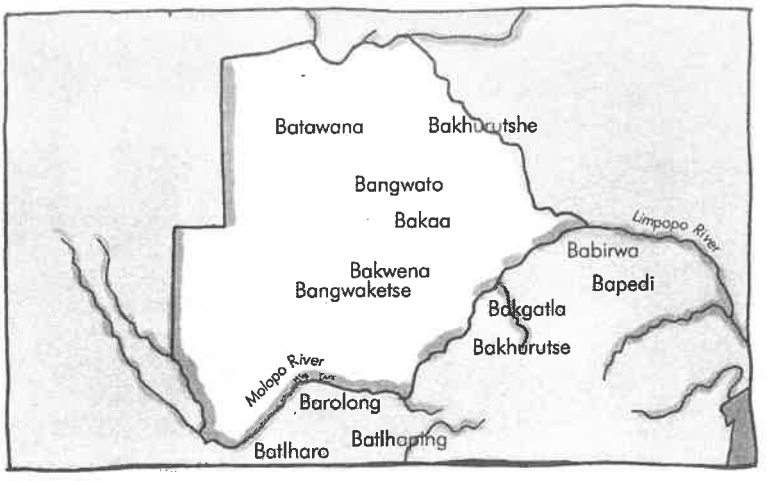
Bakololo servants. Moving up the river, he also defeated the Bekuhane before crossing over the Zambezi, in 1840, to conquer western Zambia. In the aftermath of this conquest, Sebetwane was finally able to settle down and build up his own kingdom. The Bakololo, who then included many other Batswana who had been captured during Sebetwane's long march, became the rulers of this new state. As a result, the major language spoken in western Zambia today, Silozi, is similar to Setswana.

Except for the Bekuhane and Batawana, the peoples of Botswana were free of the Bakololo after 1840.

What is the importance of the Bakololo invasion of Botswana?

The Bakololo invasion is important because of the tumult it caused. For two decades, one community after another was attacked and robbed, weakening once-strong *merafe* such as the Bangwaketse, Bangwato and Bakgatla. As a result, the region was left more vulnerable to the second wave of Difaqane invaders, the Amandebele. Yet, during their migration the Bakololo had not always been victorious. Local resistance had been a factor that caused Sebetwane to keep moving northwards until he reached Zambia.

Source 12



Using this map, trace the Bakololo's route across Botswana. Then transfer this route into a time line.

The Amandebele of Mzilikazi

Throughout the 1830s, Botswana also suffered from the aggression of the Amandebele of Mzilikazi.

The Amandebele originated in KwaZulu-Natal. Mzilikazi began as the leader of a small Northern Nguni group known as the Khumalo. For a period, he submitted to the authority of Shaka of the Amazulu. But Mzilikazi was too ambitious to accept this subordination. To build up his own power, he captured cattle from the Basotho, which he then refused to surrender to his Amazulu overlord. In 1821, Shaka sent an army to punish Mzilikazi. Mzilikazi, along with most of his Khumalo followers, escaped across the Drakensberg Mountains into what is now Mpumalanga.

Source 13

Mzilikazi, the most powerful figure north of the Vaal during the Difaqane. Here he is depicted as swaggering and self-confident. The portrait is by hunter-traveller William Cornwallis Harris, who visited Mzilikazi in 1836

At the time, Batswana living in the area referred to all Nguni as Matebele. Mzilikazi's people adopted the name, modifying it to Amandebele.

Once over the Drakensberg, Mzilikazi began to build up his power by attacking local Basotho and Batswana. At first, no *merafe* could with-stand his age regiments (*amabutho*) which were well trained and disciplined. Like other Northern Nguni, the Amandebele had adopted the long shield and short stabbing spear (assegai) as their principal weapons. They often attacked their enemies using the buffalo horns formation, which had been favoured by Shaka.

WORDS

Amabutho is the Amandebele term for a regiment of soldiers.
An **assegai** is a short stabbing spear.

Case study: The buffalo horn formation

It is often said that Shaka introduced a method of attack known as the "buffalo horn" formation. In this attack formation, well-supported regiments fought in the middle, while two flanking regiments formed the horns and encircled the enemy. But this strategy was used by other Africans, including Batswana and Bakalanga, before Shaka. The strategy was also used for group hunting. A trader described how Bangwaketse mephato used the "bull-horn" formation for a hunt in 1836:

The Captains with their companies from the right filed off to the left, passing the front of the semicircular phalanx in the greatest order and regularity. Similar orders were issued to those on the left who branched off in the opposite direction and, when about equal distance from the main body, both went off at a double-quick march ... Having allowed the right and left wings time to advance and scour the country to an extent of at least three miles on each side of us in semicircular form as they had been seated on the ground, we continued our march with the Chief at the centre, having appointed the place to close in on the game to be Makletsaanie [Matlhoshane near Moshupa] ... A little before sunset the hunters closed together at Makletsaanie, where we were to encamp for the night and killed 33 quaggas, elands and wildebeests.

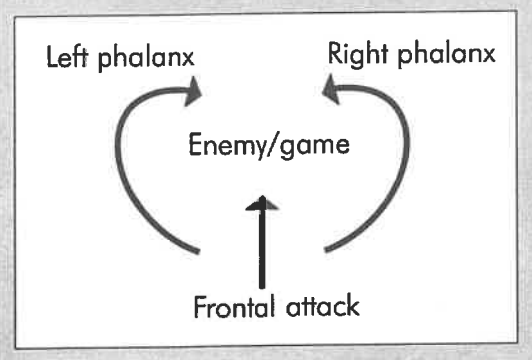


Diagram showing buffalo horn formation

WORDS

The name **Matabele** is said to be derived from Motebele who was defeated by his younger brother, Motebeyane, in an ancient struggle over Bahurutshe chieftainship. Motebele had been supported by some Nguni, who were therefore called Matebele.

Usually the Amandebele fought to completely destroy their opponents. After the battle they captured the women, children and cattle. The women and girls became Amandebele wives and were made responsible for growing food. The boys herded Mzilikazi's cattle before being trained for service in the

amabutho. As a result, many Batswana became Amandebele. By 1835, possibly over 80% of the Amandebele were of Batswana origin.

Among the groups that Mzilikazi's *amabutho* fought were the Bakwena-ba-ga-Mogopa. The Ba-ga-Mogopa were another *morafe* of Botswana's Bakwena, Bangwaketse and Bangwato. Although independent, during the early nineteenth century, members of these *merafe* sometimes still identified themselves as Ba-ga-Mogopa.The Ba-ga-Mogopa were renowned fighters, though their *kgosi*, More, had grown old and weak. After a series of fierce battles, the Ba-ga-Mogapa eventually surrendered to the Amandebele in 1827. More and his sons were executed. His fate may have convinced his Batswana relatives never to surrender to Mzilikazi. Motswetla, a Mongwato headmen, urged his *morafe* to resist Mzilikazi's invaders:

Source 14

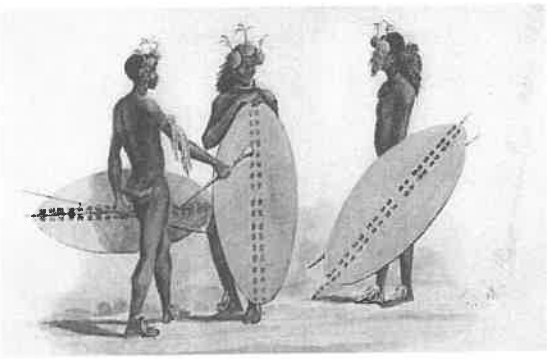
Bangwato, let us die today. Have we not been dying the death of women for years? Today let us die as men. Have we not seen our mother killed before our eyes; our wives, sisters and daughters led away by our enemies? Have we not seen our own infants thrown in the air and caught on the point of a Matabele spear? Have we not seen the same spear which transfixed the old man, thrust also at once through the infant and the mother on whose breast it hung? This is worse than death! Therefore let us go and fight with these destroyers of our people and die like men.

Some *merafe* did submit, however. Among these were the Bakgatla-ba-ga-Kgafela, who were forced to pay tribute to Mzilikazi and herd his cattle. In 1831 the Ba-ga-Kgafela ruler, Pilane, tried to break out of his subservience by joining the Griqua against the Amandebele. This alliance was defeated. In revenge, about a thousand Ba-ga-Kgafela were killed and their cattle, along with many women and children, were captured. Pilane fled into the Northern Province, where he found refuge with the powerful Balala ruler, Malepa.

Compare the speeches given by Sebego and Motswatla in Sources 11 and 14. What different reasons do they give their men to fight?

Source 15

1835 picture by C. Bell of Amandebele warriors



Compare the dress of the Amandebele warriors in Source 15 and 16 with the dress of Batswana warriors in Sources 7 and 9.

Source 16

1822 picture by William Cornwallis Harris of Amandebele warrior

In the winter of 1832, Mzilikazi, who was now being addressed as Tautona, moved to Lehurutshe in the centre of the Batswana lands. He then demanded tribute from all the *merafe*. Two tribute collectors - Bhoya and Bhangele - arrived among the Barolong-boo-Ratshidi at Khunwana during *bogwera*. The following praise poem shows how the leader of the new "Mantwa" *mophato*, the Prince Montshiwa, took matters into his own hands and executed the tribute collectors:

Source 17

Re kile ra ineelela dichaba, ra ineela, ka lebogo, merafe; Seja-Nkabo [Montshiwa] a sale mmotlana, a sale mo tharing yaga Sebodio. Jaana ke mmoonye a tlhatlosa motho lekgabana, mo pele ga ntswe ja Ga-Khunwana tlhogo, a nale mmaba, aya go bolaya, Seja-Nkabo-a-Tawana!

We once gave ourselves to other nations as a nation when Montshiwa was still young and I saw him make a person go over the hill in front of GaKhunwana hill with an enemy who was to be killed: Seja-Nkabo-Tawana.

In response, Mzilikazi sent his regiments to crush the Boo-Ratshidi, who retreated southwards. Eventually, they joined their cousins, the Barolong-boo-Seleka, other Batswana and Griqua in an anti-Amandebele coalition based at Thaba Nchu. The principal leader of this grouping was the Boo-Seleka *Kgosi* Moroka.

Sebego's Bangwaketse also killed the Tautona's tribute collectors and were attacked. The Bangwaketse were out-numbered and they retreated into the Kgalagadi, drawing the enemy after them. The Amandebele were not used to the arid environment and grew weak. Sebego sent agents to guide the invaders away from water sources. Finally, at Dutlwe, the Bangwaketse attacked and destroyed the Amandebele regiment.

The Batswana-Boer-Griqua Alliance

In 1836, the Batswana and Griqua at Thaba Nchu were joined in their struggle by a new group, the Boers. Small groups of Boers had begun to pass by Thaba Nchu on their way to hunt for ivory in what is now the Northern Province. At the time, the Batswana did not know that these newcomers were the beginning of a major migration, known as the "Great Trek".

We will look at this in more detail in Chapter 7.

Initially, the Boers ignored the Batswana warnings about the danger of trespassing into Mzilikazi's territory. Two parties of Boers were nearly wiped out by the Amandebele in September 1836. A month later, a third party, under Hendrik Potgieter, was left stranded with little ammunition or food, after barely surviving an Amandebele attack. Hearing of their predicament, Moroka decided to rescue the Boers, who were escorted back to Thaba Nchu.

A new Batswana-Boer-Griqua alliance was formed in December 1836. Its leaders, which included Moroka and

Potgieter, and the others decided to attack the Amandebele at Mosega, near modern Zeerust. The joint Batswana-Boer-Griqua force struck at dawn on 17 January 1837. The Amandebele spears were no match for the attackers' guns. A resident American missionary reported:

Source 18

Sometime before sunrise we were aroused by a startling cry, A commando! A commando! In half a minute after this alarming cry a brisk fire commenced on a kraal of people a few hundred yards from our house. The fire of one followed that of another in quick succession and at the thrilling report of every gun the thought would rush on our minds, there falls one and another and another of the poor heathen of whose salvation we had once had some hope. In a few minutes we were in the midst of the slaughter .... The Boers attacked and destroyed thirteen, some say fifteen, kraals. Few of the men belonging to them escaped and many of the women were either shot down or killed with assegais.

Although Mzilikazi, along with most of his warriors, had been further north when the attack occurred, the Mosega massacre was a heavy blow. Some 1 000 Amandebele had fallen. The attackers suffered only two casualties, both Batswana.

In the aftermath of the massacre, Mzilikazi's position became increasingly desperate. On all sides, groups joined the southern Batswana-Boer-Griqua alliance in challenging the Amandebele. To the north, refugees like Pilane reinforced the position of Mapela's Balanga. From the south east, the Amazulu, under Shaka's brother Dingane, defeated a large Amandebele force in August 1837. To the west, Sechele's Bakwena, Sekgoma's Bangwato and Sebego's Bangwaketse engaged in hit and run attacks against Mzilikazi's forces.

On 4 November 1837, a combined force of Barolong and Boers burned Mzilikazi's capital, eGabeni and other Amandebele settlements along the Madikwe River. Once again, Mzilikazi was away at the time of the attack. He had gone north to fight Mapela. Some other Amandebele had already been sent to scout an alternative route through Botswana. In the face of the new Barolong-Boer offensive, Mzilikazi decided to move the rest of his people. On 12

November 1837, the Batswana and Boers watched together as thousands of Amandebele crossed into Botswana at Sikwane.

The Amandebele in Botswana

For the Batswana of Botswana the struggle against the Amandebele now entered a new and more dangerous phase.

Sechele and Sekgoma suddenly found themselves in the path of Mzilikazi's advance. With the entire Amandebele population pouring across Kweneng's eastern frontier, Sechele pulled back from Kopong to the relative safety of his Lephepe hideaway. Bakwena scouts kept a careful eye on the invaders' movements. They reported that the Amandebele had divided into two columns. Mzilikazi and most of his warriors were moving quickly to the north west, while a second column, under a general named Gundwane, went north east. Sechele saw his opportunity and attacked the second column, capturing many cattle.

Further north, Sekgoma was also bold. He raided the Bakaa cattleposts around Shoshong after hearing that they had been entrusted with Amandebele *mafisa* or loan cattle. Mzilikazi then sent a force against Sekgoma, which recaptured the cattle and took many Bangwato captives. According to some accounts, Sekgoma then surprised the enemy by launching a counterattack at Paje, where he recaptured most of his losses before retreating to the Makgadikadi Pans. It was there that Sekgoma's eventual heir, Kgama III, was born. After the Amandebele had left the region, Sekgoma returned to the Shoshong Hills. There he began rebuilding Bangwato power by establishing his authority over the Baphaleng, Batalaote and Batswapong.

The fall of the Bakalanga Kingdom

While moving through Botswana, Mzilikazi's ultimate destination had been western Zimbabwe, the core area of the Butwa Kingdom of Bakalanga Banyayi. For decades, the

kingdom had been weakened by internal tensions. Its king (*Mambo*), other members of the royal Nichasike dynasty, the chief tribute collector (*Tumbale*) and the high priest of *Mwali* all quarrelled.

Local chiefs (*boshe*) used these arguments as an opportunity to take more power for themselves. Many of these *boshe*, including most of those in Botswana, belonged to the Balilima rather than the Banyayi branch of the Bakalanga.

From 1832 the Bakalanga kingdom was further disrupted by Ngoni (Northern Nguni) invaders who, like the Amandebele, had fled Shaka's wars. One of these groups, led by a woman named Nyamazana, killed the *Mambo* Chilisamhulu just before the arrival of the Amandebele in 1840. Mzilikazi subsequently married Nyamazana, resulting in her soldiers joining his army. Thereafter, surviving members of the Nichasike dynasty fled to the east, leaving most of their subjects to the Amandebele.

After 1840, Mzilikazi consolidated his authority over the Bakalanga of north eastern Botswana and western Zimbabwe by diplomacy as well as force. He respected the *Mwali* priests and distributed loan cattle to *boshe* who accepted his rule. In return, however, the *boshe* had to pay tribute and send young men to be brought up as Amandebele warriors.

Amandebele society was now divided into three classes: the Northern Nguni upper class (Khumalo); the middle class of predominately Batswana origin (Zansi); and the lower class comprising Bakalanga and their Vashona cousins (Holi).

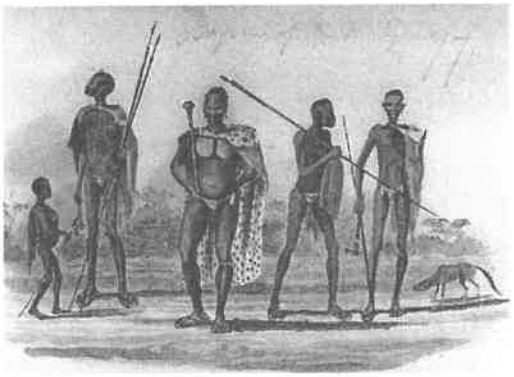
The fall of the Bakalanga Kingdom marks the end of the Difaqane in Botswana. Some communities in northern Botswana, though, continued to live with the threat of Amandebele raids up until the 1880s.

Look back at the map on page 81. Now trace a route and draw a timeline for the activities of the Amandebele in Botswana during the Difaqane.

Consequences of the Difaqane

Source 19

Bakwena refugees from Mzilikazi's wrath

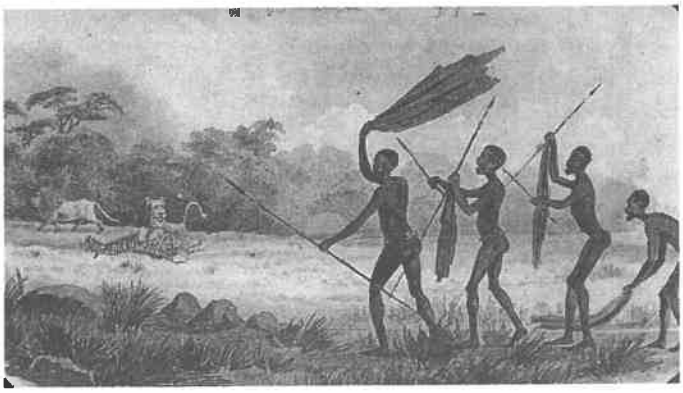


Source 20

Batswana women catching locusts

Source 21

Batswana men chasing lions from their prey



Using the paintings as evidence, name at least one consequence of the Difaqane in Botswana. Explain how you found your answer.

The Difaqane had many adverse consequences for Botswana.

- Communities lost lives and property to the invaders. For example, it is estimated that between 1820 and 1840 the Bakwena in Botswana were reduced to one quarter of their previous population. While many were killed, many others were taken as captives, often never to return. Thus a large proportion of Sindebele speakers of Zimbabwe today are descended from Batswana.

- Other people were simply scattered across the countryside. This fact partly explains why people of many backgrounds live side by side today.

As we saw in previous chapters, it has long been common for people to break away from their own group to join another. The Difaqane simply increased this trend.

Not all of the adverse consequences of the Difaqane were a direct result of foreign aggression. As in the case of the other parts of Africa affected by the Difaqane, many victimised communities in Botswana turned into victimisers themselves. Examples of these include the Bangwaketse attacking Bakgalagadi communities and the Bangwato attacking their Central District neighbours. While some *merafe* were able to recover from the effects of the Difaqane, others were less fortunate. The Bakalanga kingdom was gone forever.

There were also some positive things that grew out of the Difaqane.

- Although the Difaqane reduced the size of many communities, it also provided a foundation for subsequent state building. During the period, many *merafe* came together for their common defence. In some cases these alliances turned into long-term relationships. Two examples are the Bakhurutshe and Bakalanga-ba-ka-Nswazwi, both of whom became allies of the Bangwato against the Amandebele.
- The Difaqane also increased Batswana's appreciation of the gun, and the power that came with it. By the end of the period, rulers like Sechele and Sekgoma were trading for guns with Griqua and Europeans. This trade had important consequences when the Batawana were forced to confront Motswasele's "white ants", the Boers (see the next chapter).

To sum up: between 1820 and 1840, communities in Botswana were destroyed by Bakololo and Amandebele invaders. Many **merafe** were reduced in size, while the Bakalanga kingdom was completely destroyed. The period, however, was also marked by the emergence of strong local leaders, such as Sebego, Sechele and Sekgoma, who began building strong states of their own.

What have I learnt?

1. a) What does the term Difaqane mean?
   b) What other names have Batswana had for the Difaqane?
2. a) Name four possible reasons for the outbreak of the Difaqane in KwaZulu-Natal.
   b) Which seem most plausible to you?
3. How might the trade in slaves and ivory to Mozambique and the Cape have contributed to the Difaqane?
4. What might have caused Sebetwane to choose to initially invade Kweneng rather than Gangwaketse in 1825?
5. a) Name six *merafe* who fought the Bakololo.
   B) How did disunity in Botswana contribute to the Bakololo invasions?
6. What were the major results of the Bakololo invasion for Botswana and Zambia?
7. Why might the execution of More and his sons have encouraged Sechele, Sebego and Sekgoma to resist rather than to give in to the Amandebele?

Chapter Seven

Trade and the 1852-53 Batswana-Boer War

Introduction

Chapter 6 focused on the impact of the Difaqane, when Botswana was invaded by the "black ants" of Motswasele II's prophecy, that is the Bakololo and the Amandebele. In this chapter, we will learn about Motswasele's "white ants", that is Europeans or white settlers, who he said would follow the earlier invaders.

Before the 1885 imposition of colonial rule, three types of Europeans had a major impact on Botswana: Boers, traders and missionaries. Of course, not all the Europeans who arrived fell into just one of these three groupings. A lot of missionaries and Boers engaged in trade in precolonial Botswana, and at least one Boer became a missionary.

This chapter will look at the roles of the Boers and traders, while the role of the missionaries is discussed later.

In many ways, the whites proved to be more troublesome to the Batswana than the earlier invaders. They brought new ideas and technologies, which made them both useful and dangerous. From the beginning, the response of the Batswana to the coming of the Europeans was shaped by their determination to remain free of foreign rule. In this respect, it was the military power of the whites that was most impressive. Fascination with European consumer goods, knowledge and religious ideas were of secondary importance. During the Difaqane, the Batswana had already learned two important lessons:

- firstly, that the Europeans posed a far greater threat to them than either the Bakololo or Amandebele
- secondly, that to defend themselves against future invaders, they needed to acquire guns.

The arrival of the white ants coincided with a boom in Botswana's external trade. Game products, mainly ivory, ostrich feathers and karosses or skins, were sold in return for guns and other goods imported from Asia, the Americas and Europe. By selling game products and acquiring guns, the Batswana were able to defend their independence in the Batswana-Boer War of 1852-53.

External trade

As we learnt in Chapter 2, people in Botswana have had trade links with the outside world for a long time.

In the eighteenth century, Batswana were in trading contact with the Boers at the Cape and the Portuguese stations of coastal Angola and Mozambique. Until the nineteenth century, products from Botswana reached these European markets through African middlemen. Thus, for many years, trade with the Cape was conducted through Khoe and Batlhaping intermediaries. Trade with Mozambique was likewise dependent on Vashona middlemen, while much of the Angolan trade passed through the hands of the Ovimbundu.

This early, indirect trade with the Europeans was part of an extensive regional trading system in which African communities exchanged goods with one another. Through this system, iron tools made by local Bakalanga, Bakgatla and Barolong craftsmen reached the shores of Namibia and the Cape. Copper, livestock and game products were also traded across long distances.

During the Difaqane, much of Botswana's external trade passed into the hands of the Griqua, a Khoe group of mixed descent whose culture had been influenced by European

ways. Like the European traders who followed them, the Griqua used ox wagons, horses and guns. These three things allowed them to defend themselves while carrying goods across long distances. The Griqua had a clear trade advantage over other Africans, who had no firearms and mostly transported goods by foot.

Source 1

"Griqua horseman" sketched by Charles Bell

Missionaries and trade

During the Difaqane, a few Europeans had also begun to appear in Botswana, often accompanied by Griqua. Thereafter their numbers grew. In 1838, David Hume established the first European trading company to operate in Botswana. Hume's base was at a mission station at Kudumane (Kuruman), but in 1847 he posted an agent named Evans to live among the Bakwena at Kolobeng. Evans followed Botswana's first resident missionary, David Livingstone, who had just established himself there.

The connection between Hume's stores and mission stations shows that early European traders often preferred to work in places where missionaries were present. Livingstone, himself, acknowledged that:

> **Wherever a missionary lives, traders are sure to come; they are mutually dependent and each aids the other.**

Source 2

The mutual dependence of missionaries and traders is partially reflected in accounts of local changes in dress. A German, who toured eastern Botswana in the 1860s, noted that in the larger villages "the blacks viewed dressing up (in European clothes) on Sunday as an essential part of their religion". Another early visitor observed that for prominent Molepolole women, Sunday dress required imported hats like those worn by the missionaries' wives.

Discuss Livingstone's comment on the relationship between missionaries and traders. Do you agree that religion and trade should go hand in hand?

Missionaries encouraged the Batswana to adopt European dress. The cloth to make the clothes was bought from traders. Missionary wives and female missionaries played an especially important role by teaching Batswana European methods of tailoring. But the adoption of European clothing was not entirely encouraged by religion. Many non-Christians quickly came to prefer the new style of dress for comfort and as a mark of social status.

Source 3

Source 4

In Sources 3 and 4, you can see pictures of chiefs and their wives. Write a paragraph comparing the dress of the two couples. Use what you learnt about pictures as information in Chapter 6.

In addition to tailoring, the missionaries taught the Batswana other skills and practices that encouraged them to buy imported goods. Livingstone, for example, introduced the plough, which gradually replaced locally produced hoes.

Under missionary influence, Kolobeng, and later Molepolole and Shoshong, grew into important trading centres. When traders conducted business in other parts of the country, the

mission stations often served as places where their goods could be stored safely. Some missionaries were also valued as mediators in commercial disputes between Batswana and traders. A few missionaries even became traders themselves.

For two groups to trade with one another, they must each have something that the other wants. This condition is called **supply and demand**. In the mid-nineteenth century, the Batswana were able to supply ivory to the traders who sold it for high prices in South Africa. Batswana had little need for ivory, but to the Europeans it was a valuable commodity. In return for ivory, the Batswana commonly demanded guns. By possessing guns, the Batswana could both defend themselves and hunt more efficiently. Thus, by the 1850s, a system of exchange had emerged throughout Botswana in which a small elephant tusk was valued at one new gun with ammunition. Although the same tusk could often be resold in the Cape Colony for three times the value of a gun, the Batswana were not cheated. The traders had high costs and were taking large risks by travelling long distances to buy ivory. It is clear then that the Batswana suppliers received a reasonable price for their ivory.

Can you think of a modern example of supply and demand?

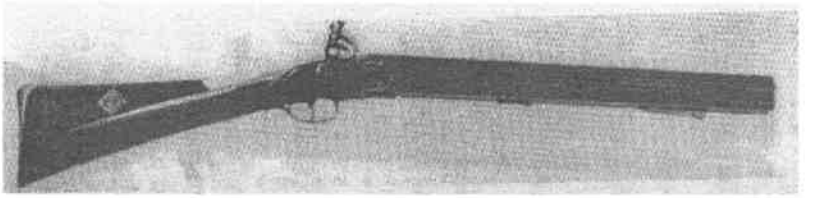
Batswana-Boer relations before 1852

The major motive behind the Batswana demand for guns during the nineteenth century was the fear of Boer aggression.

Between 1835 and 1850, some 12 000 Boers left the coastal regions of the British-ruled Cape Colony to settle inland. Eventually, most settled in what are today the Free State, Gauteng and the Northern Province. Today, the descendants of these Boer settlers call this mass migration the Great Trek.

Source 5

A seven-barrelled volley gun. Sechele ordered such a gun through Livingstone and Moffat



The Great Trek

This Great Trek was not great for the Africans of the Free State and areas north of the Vaal River. For them, the arrival of the Boers meant losing their land and independence. It also resulted in slavery. Many Africans were forced to work for the Boers without pay, while others were bought and sold as property. For these Africans, the Great Trek brought subjugation.

Communities in Botswana were also threatened by the Great Trek, but unlike their relatives in South Africa they managed to avoid subjugation. This is because they united successfully to defend their independence in the Batswana-Boer War of 1852-53.

At the time, the Boers hoped to make Botswana part of their newly proclaimed South African Republic (SAR). Although the Boers began the hostilities by invading south eastern Botswana, it was they who soon found themselves on the defensive.

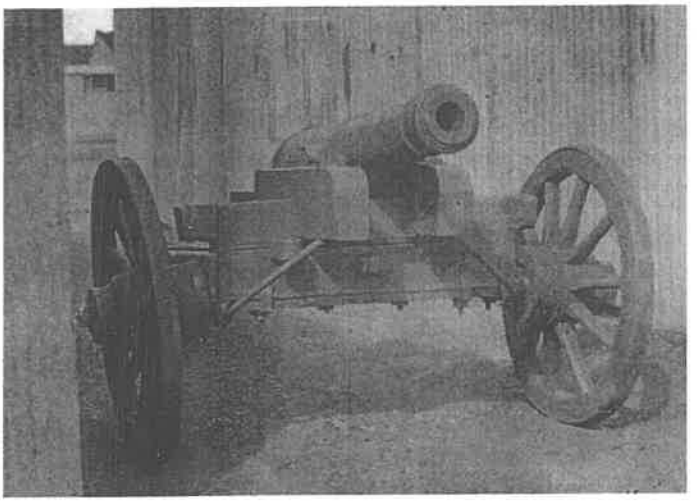
Sechele arms his people

The Bakwena *Kgosi* Sechele I was the principal hero of the Batswana-Boer War. In the aftermath of the Difaqane, he had emerged as the most powerful Batswana *kgosi* by trading ivory and other game products for guns. With them, he armed ever-larger hunting parties, which killed even more animals - The skins and ivory that resulted bought Sechele's people even more guns. Because he learned arithmetic, as well as how to

read and write, Sechele became skilful in his negotiations with the European traders.

Source 6

Sechele's cannon, now at Mafikeng museum



Sechele's activities, though, made the Boers nervous. The white settlers knew that their possession of guns gave them power over black people and so they were afraid of any armed Africans. In 1844, the Boers demanded that Sechele give up his guns and submit to their authority. Instead, Sechele fortified his village. As the trader R.G. Cumming noted:

Source 7

A short time previous to my arrival, a rumour having reached Sichely [Sechele] that he was likely to be a attacked by emigrant Boers, he suddenly resolved to secure his city with a wall of stones, which he at once commenced erecting. It was now completed, entirely surrounding the town, with loopholes at intervals all along through which to play upon the advancing enemy with the muskets which he had resolved to purchase from hunters and traders like myself.

Throughout the 1840s, relations between Bakwena and Boers remained tense but peaceful. When in 1846, the Boers confiscated the wagons of one trader for carrying arms to

Sechele, the missionary Livingstone calmed Boer fears about Bakwena military strength. Tension thereafter increased as the Boers began to suspect Livingstone himself was involved in the arms trade. The Boers were correct. Livingstone's own correspondence confirms that he, along with his father-in-law, Robert Moffat, assisted Sechele's efforts in acquiring firearms and moulds for making bullets. In a letter to his parents, Livingstone justified this assistance, noting:

Source 8

Resistance to such tyrants and murderers (i.e. The Boers) is I think obedience to God. The only means which with the divine blessing we have preserved our independence as a people are those very guns which you think the people would be better off without. The tribe would never have enjoyed the gospel but for firearms.

Boer concerns about Livingstone and Sechele heightened in 1849. The missionary, along with some of his trader friends, including a black American named George Fleming, were the first outsiders to be shown the route to the ivory wealth of Ngamiland. The discovery, which had been organised by Sechele and the Batawana *Kgosi* Letsholathebe I, increased the level of ivory and gun trading. More guns came quickly into Botswana from the Cape Colony.

Comment on how Sechele's use of Western education and attitudes helped him in his defence of his people. (You may want to add to your answer when you have completed the chapter.)

The treaty of "peace and friendship"

Initially, the Boers tried to stop the trade by arresting a number of travellers going to Botswana. Other traders came anyway. So, in December 1850, the Boers demanded that Sechele sign a treaty of "peace and friendship". Sechele refused, as this treaty would have required the Bakwena and their allies to supply the Boers with unpaid labour.

Do you think that the Boers wanted "peace and friendship" from the Batswana? On what terms?

In April 1851, the Boer leader Andries Pretorius concluded that Sechele's people would have to be forcibly disarmed. But, noting that it would no longer be an easy operation, he called for caution and consultations with the British.

During August and September 1851, Sechele and the other *dikgosi* living west of the Madikwe received new demands from the Boers. Again, the white settlers demanded unpaid labour. The Bakwena and Bangwaketse continued to resist these demands. But many communities living to their immediate east, such as the Bahurutshe, Bakgatla-ba-ga-Mmanaana and Batlokwa, submitted in the face of a Boer commando or military expedition.

The Batswana-Boer War

The war begins

Boer confidence increased after January 1852, when they and the British signed the Sand River Convention. Through this agreement, the British accepted the independence of the Boers north of the Vaal River. The British also agreed to join the Boers in suppressing the sale of arms and ammunition to all black Africans. Pretorius, in return, agreed to allow British traders free movement in the SAR. He also promised to stop his people from enslaving blacks, but this promise was not kept.

Pretorius now felt strong enough to invade Botswana. He assembled an invading army made up of some 430 Boer horsemen and over 600 Africans. Because Pretorius was ill, Pieter Scholtz commanded the force. At the time, the SAR's male Boer population numbered some 5 000. So Scholtz's commando was a big force, which showed that the Boers were determined to win.

Why do you think there were Africans in the Boer army? Support your answer.

Many Africans had been forced to join the SAR's commando. Some rulers, like *Kgosi* Mangope of the Bahurutshe-boo-Manyane, had been captured as hostages to assure their people's co-operation. Others, such as *Dikgosi* Mosielele and Montshiwa, escaped to join Sechele's resistance rather than submit. Only one *kgosi,* Moilwa of the Bahurutshe at Dinokana, volunteered to help the Boers. He thereafter was known by blacks and whites alike as "the dog of the Boers".

1. What do you think "the dog of the Boers" means?

2. Do you think it is a compliment? Explain why.

On 17 August 1852, Scholtz's force advanced on Mosielele who, seeing that he was outgunned, retreated with most of his people to Sechele's fortified settlement at Dimawe (near Kolobeng). In the days that followed, the Boers destroyed the London Missionary Society mission station at Mosielele's abandoned settlement, victimising those who had failed to escape. Up to 90 Batswana were killed and many more women and children were captured and made slaves.

Source 9

Mosielele in 1865

The Battle of Dimawe

The Boers arrived at Dimawe on Saturday, 28 August 1852. In addition to the Bakwena, they found the Bangwaketse, Ba-ga-Mmanaana and Bakaa all ready to fight them under Sechele's leadership. Upon his arrival, Scholtz demanded that Sechele surrender Mosielele and "enter into an arrangement" with the SAR. Sechele replied:

> Wait till Monday. I shall not deliver up Mosielele: he is my child. If I am to deliver him up, you shall have to rip open my belly; but I am, like yourself, provided with the arms and ammunition and have more fighting people than you. I should not have allowed you thus to come in and would have assuredly fired on you; but I have looked into the book [the Bible], upon which I reserved my fire. I am myself provided with cannon. Keep yourself quiet tomorrow and do not quarrel for water till Monday; then we shall see who is the strongest man. You are already in my pot; I shall only have to put the lid on it on Monday.

Source 10

The negotiations

A two-day truce was arranged to allow time for negotiation. The Boers were given free passage to the waters of the Kolobeng River, during which time the Batswana made a show of displaying their guns. On the following day, a number of Boers attended the Batswana Sunday prayer services led by a Motswana preacher named Mebalwe.

Meanwhile, the two leaders exchanged messages. Hoping that bravado might deter the Boers, Sechele asked Scholtz for some tea and sugar. In return, the *kgosi* offered the general gunpowder if he "had not brought enough with him for a long fight". Scholtz replied that since men of war did not need sugar, he would "give Sechele chillies instead". The Bakwena messengers then volunteered to show the Boers where to avoid poisonous grass (*mogau*) for, after the fighting ended, their oxen would surely belong to Sechele. More seriously, the leaders agreed to face to face negotiations at dawn on Monday.

Were the negotiators really offering each other food such as chillies and sugar? Or did they mean something else?

The Monday meeting failed to resolve anything. Sechele called upon Scholtz to justify his demand for Mosielele. Instead, Scholtz underscored the real issues at stake by calling on the Bakwena and their allies to disarm, to supply the Boers with unpaid labour and to otherwise obey Pretorius. Sechele replied that he would remain a *kgosi* through the grace of God and his people, not the Boers.

The Boers advance

As soon as the meeting broke up in disagreement, the battle commenced. The invaders stormed Dimawe's hillside entrenchments. In their initial advance, the Boers marched behind their African troops, using them as human shields.

In Source 10, Sechele uses many metaphors and descriptions to make his point to Scholtz. Explain in your own words what Sechele means when:

1. He describes Mosielele as his child and that the Boers "shall have to rip open [his] belly" to "deliver him up".

2. He has "looked into the book".

3. He says that Scholtz is "already in my pot; I shall only have to put the lid on it on Monday".

This complicated the task of the defenders, who refrained from shooting their helpless brothers.

After more than six hours of battle, the Boers burned Dimawe village and overran the Bangwaketse and Ba-ga-Mmanaana positions. But by sunset, the core of the Batswana defenders under Sechele's command still held their positions on the top of Boswelakgosi Hill. Unable to move them and with night approaching, Scholtz called off the attack.

In groups, prepare a role-play depicting the negotiations before the Battle of Dimawe. Use the exchanges described, but also include your own imaginary ones to show the attitudes of both groups.

How to prepare a role-play

1. Choose who will be which set of characters. The characters can include real and imaginary ones.
2. Discuss the following aspects of your characters:
   - What would they wear?
   - What would their attitudes to each other be? How would they show these attitudes?
   - What are the specific personality traits of each character? Think of dignity, aggression, etc.
   - Would they speak in a certain way?
   - How important are they in the society in which they live?
3. What is the central event of the role-play? A good role-play usually centres on conflict.
4. Start the role-play as close to the point of conflict as possible.
5. Through the role-play, try to reveal as many aspects of the history you have learnt as possible.

The Batswana regroup

Under the cover of darkness, Sechele then retreated, regrouping his forces at Dithubaruba, a natural fortress. On the following morning, the Boers are alleged to have massacred the wounded Batswana who had been left behind. For three days thereafter, Scholtz divided his forces in pursuit of the now scattered enemy. During this period his men broke into Livingstone's unoccupied Kolobeng mission. As they later reported:

Source 11

> We found several half-finished guns and a gunmaker's shop with an abundance of tools. We here found more guns and tools than Bibles, so that the place had more the appearance of a gunmaker's shop than a mission station and more a smuggling shop than a school place.

Comment on the attitude expressed in this report. How do you think the Boers felt towards the missionaries?

In another action, *Kgosi* Senthufe regrouped the Bangwaketse at Kanye's Kgwakgwe Hill and successfully repulsed the pursuing enemy. After his defeat, Scholtz's men refused to attack Sechele's Dithubaruba stronghold.

The Boers withdraw

On Friday, 3rd September, Scholtz decided to withdraw from Botswana, taking with him 143 captive women and children and a large number of cattle. Additional property, belonging to Bakwena and English traders, was also seized and later auctioned. The Boers had failed, however, in their primary mission of subjugating the local population. As the Boers withdrew, the Batswana harassed them with hit-and-run attacks. For the Boers, the invasion had been a failure. According to most sources, 36 Boers died as a result of the invasion. The Batswana losses were higher, at 89 dead, but they had succeeded in preserving their independence.

The Batswana strike back

Nine days after his withdrawal, Scholtz reported to Pretorius:

Source 12

I must regretfully inform you that I have been obliged to disband the commando, owing partly to the weakness of the horses and the oxen and partly to opposition among the men...moreover I greatly fear, since I cannot keep the commando intact to accomplish anything, that the Marico district will be unsafe...things have not worked out to my liking.

Scholtz's concern proved to be well founded, for, in the months following Dimawe, Batswana launched retaliatory raids into the SAR's Marico District. By November 1852, an English trader noted that:

Source 13

All the Boers are still in laager, they have been in laager a long time. They dare not venture on their farms for fear of Sechilli. Their cattle are dying fast being too many together and disease is amongst them.

A newspaper, the *South African Commercial Advertiser*, reported that Batswana "natives" had united in a strong body against the farmers in the Mariqua district:

Source 14

Great destruction, of course, marked the progress of the conquering natives. Every homestead has been burned and standing corn, ripe for the sickle, together with vineyards and gardens, which then were in full bloom, have been entirely destroyed.

As the Batswana went on the offensive, the original anti-Boer alliance of Bakwena, Bangwaketse, . Ba-ga-Mmanaana, Bakaa and Barolong was broadened to include other groups. When a Boer attempted to rape one of the wives of the Batlokwa *Kgosi* Matlapeng, the *kgosi* shot the villain and led his people to Sechele's. Other groups that migrated into south eastern Botswana to join the resistance included the Balete, Bahurutshe, Batlhako, Barokgologadi and some Griqua.

Today, the descendants of the above groups can still be found throughout south eastern Botswana.

Confusion among the Boers

In an attempt to regain the initiative, Pretorius took personal command of the SAR's forces. He then set out to strike a blow against Sechele's ally Montshiwa, attacking the Barolong at Mosite. According to the Barolong, as soon as the firing started, the already sick Pretorius was wounded. After he left the field, the Boers became confused and they retreated without victory. The belief that Pretorius had been killed (he did die a few months later) is reflected in the praise poem of Mokoko Marumo, the man who shot him:

Source 15

The hero of the white horse is nowhere to be seen,
the leader of the white troops has bitten the dust,
he has been attacked by the eagle of Marumo,
he is initiated into colour blind mysteries.
His lady is in tears, but her eyes look away,
as she curses the eagle that is born of Marumo,
says the monster has eaten up our husbands
and thus condemned them to dismal widowhood.

After their Mosite setback, the Boer position in the western SAR became desperate. The Batswana's hit-and-run tactics continued to weaken the Boers. Many Boers took no further part in the fighting. Frustrated by increasing Boer disunity, in December 1852 the wounded Pretorius warned his people that:

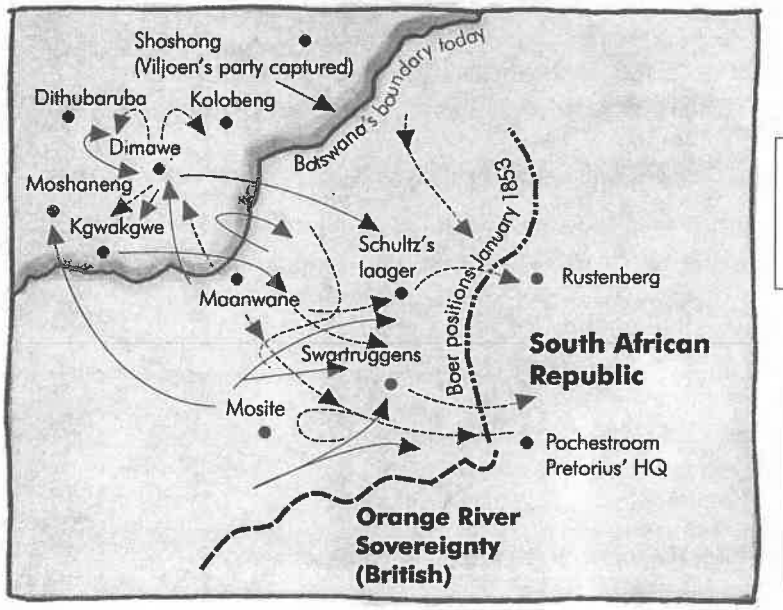
Source 16

"If this segmentation persists, we small number will be surrounded by dozens of enemies, be defeated and vanish. Even if we are united our task is difficult, but with this disunity it has become impossible."

By January 1853, the Boers had been forced to evacuate the Marico District. A new defensive line was established from Potchefstroom to Rustenberg. At the same time, the Batlhaping and Bangwato joined the Batswana alliance.

Source 17

Map showing Batswana-Boer War



Batswana-Boer War

Boer movements ----------▶

Batswana movements ——▶

Identify what happened at each of the settlements shown on the map.

Viljoen makes peace

Also in January 1853, some peace-loving Boers succeeded in negotiating an end to the war. These Boers were led by Jan Viljoen. At the time of the Battle of Dimawe, Viljoen, together with some other Boers, had been hunting and trading in Gammangwato. Messengers from Sechele arrived asking Bangwato to intercept and kill any Boers who passed through their territory. But the Bangwato *Kgosi* Sekgoma I decided to let Viljoen's party leave in peace. He reportedly told Viljoen:

Source 18

Jannie, I love you and it is because of this that I let you go . . . I know you will come back to shoot me.

As it turned out, Sekgoma was wrong. Upon his return to the SAR, Viljoen spoke out in opposition to Scholtz's desire to launch a second attack on Sechele. He accused Scholtz of being "the sole cause of the losses of the Boers and the enmity of all the tribes". Viljoen then had the support of many others who, like himself, traded in Botswana's game products. Viljoen met with Pretorius and obtained the President's blessing to take up Sechele's offer of peace talks. Sechele demanded the release of his son Kgari, who had been captured and enslaved. As a result, Pretorius personally purchased Kgari and turned him over to Viljoen.

Viljoen then set out to meet with Sechele's representatives in order to deliver Kgari. Scholtz, who wished to sabotage the negotiations, detained Viljoen. In anger, Viljoen told Scholtz that "the thunder would fetch him". That same afternoon, as a large meeting gathered to listen to Scholtz's call for continued war, lightning struck his laager's gunpowder, injuring a dozen people. Scholtz, himself, was afterwards found sitting on a large case of gunpowder. According to an eyewitness, "the lightning penetrated between the box and his body burning his

Draw up a timeline to show the events of the Batswana-Boer War.

legs and sides". Happy to be alive, he exclaimed that the Lord in heaven had spoken in favour of Viljoen's peace initiative!

Kgari's release resulted in the January 1853 peace agreement between the Bakwena-led Batswana alliance and the Boers. Only in May 1853, when three Bakwena were murdered in the SAR, did the cease-fire break down. After the Bakwena killed two Boers in retaliation, peace resumed.

However, relations between the Bakwena and Boers remained tense until 1857. During this time, Sechele pressed for the return of the other captives, many of whom escaped or were released. Eventually, a lasting peace emerged in which both sides recognised Botswana's current eastern boundary as their common border.

"If the Boers had not been defeated, then Botswana would have become part of the SAR. It is unlikely that Batswana today would enjoy the freedom of living in their own country if Sechele had not been victorious."

Do you agree with this assessment of the Batswana-Boer war of 1852-53? Explain your answer.

The Cape Town Mission

With the Boer threat diminished, Sechele turned his attention to the British. Between December 1852 and June 1853, he travelled to Bloemfontein and Cape Town. He hoped to convince the British to set aside the Sand River Convention's ban on the sale of weapons to Africans. He was unable to end the ban, but he succeeded in making friends with whites, many of whom helped him in later years.

From the beginning, Sechele had the backing of his traders and missionaries. Two traders, Frederick Green and Sam Edwards, accompanied him. At Bloemfontein, Sechele enjoyed an advantage in that Frederick Green was the brother of Henry Green, the British Resident Commissioner. British military officers held a dinner for the *kgosi*, which raised £119 British Pounds, "a handsome sum of money to enable him to pursue his journey to England". After raising more money in Colesburg, Sechele proceeded to Port Elizabeth where he boarded a steamship for Cape Town.

At Cape Town, the Governor General Lord Cathcart prevented Sechele from going to Britain. So Sechele sent a letter stating his views to the British Parliament and returned home. Although Sechele's letter had the support of many missionaries and human rights activists, the Government ignored it. Sechele was disappointed. He began denying traders access

to the Kgalagadi unless they traded for guns with him. At the same time, Sechele and his advisors became angry with the British, saying that the Boers were simply their "Bushmen":

Source 19

We have been told that the English are a wise nation. Ashu! What is wisdom? We have been told the English are a strong nation. They have driven their white Bushmen into our country to kill us. Is this strength? Have the English no cattle and slaves of their own that they send their white Bushmen to take our cattle and our children to sell? We are told that the English love all men. They give or sell ammunition, horses and guns to the Boers, who have red teeth, destroy us, and if we ask to buy powder, we get none. No, no, no! Black man must have no ammunition: they must serve the white man. Is this love? The English are not friends of the black man.

In the end, the Sand River Convention's ban on the trade in guns was unenforceable. Traders ignored the law and sold guns to Africans.

Batswana-Boer relations improve

Sechele's success in resisting the Boers greatly increased his following. Whereas in 1849 he had 3 620 subjects, including 1 236 allied Bakaa, by 1857 the population in and around Dithubaruba was said to be about 20 000. Other estimates confirm an enormous growth in the nineteenth century population of Gammangwato and Gangwaketse, as well as Kweneng. Many blacks had left the SAR to live under independent Batswana rule.

In 1857 Batswana-Boer relations improved. The SAR took up Sechele's request for new missionaries by arranging for the

Hermannsburg Mission (German Evangelical Lutheran) to work in Botswana. With the new missionaries came a flowering of economic and social ties.

By 1860, the postal routes to Botswana, as well as most wagon commerce, passed through the SAR. During the same year, Sechele travelled to the SAR as the guest of Marthinus W. Pretorius, the son of Andries, who by then was the Republic's President.

Following this visit, some Bakwena began to work for pay in the SAR. At the same time, small numbers of Boer artisans began to migrate to Botswana. By 1880, some Boer children were even attending Molepolole's Setswana medium school. While a few Boers became part of Batswana society, Batswana also adopted aspects of Boer culture. Many, including Sechele's heir, Sebele, spoke Afrikaans, at a time when English was almost unknown.

To sum up: in the aftermath of the Difaqane, local **dikgosi**, including Sechele, took advantage of the growth in the ivory trade with the Cape Colony to provide their **merafe** with guns. This allowed them to preserve their independence in the 1852-53 Batswana-Boer War.

What have I learnt?

1. Give three examples of how missionaries assisted the activities of early European traders in Botswana.
2. a) What was the Great Trek?
   b) How did it affect the lives of black Africans living in South Africa?
3. a) How did Sechele acquire his guns?
   b)What role did Livingstone play in the arming of Batswana?
4. a) Name four provisions of the 1852 Sand River

convention.

b) How did it encourage the SAR Boers to attack Sechele?

5. a) Which Batswana groups fought in the Battle of Dimawe?

b) Who won the battle?

c) Why?

6. a)Between September 1852 and January 1853 where was the Batswana-Boer War mostly fought ?

b) How did the Batswana gain an advantage?

7. a) What role did Jan Viljoen play in the Batswana-Boer War?

b) Why do you think Pretorius wanted peace?

8. a) Why did some Bakwena blame the British for Boer attacks?

b) How did Batswana-Boer relations change after 1857?

Chapter Eight

State building in the south east

Introduction

In the decades that followed the Difaqane, two strong states emerged in south eastern Botswana: Kweneng and Gangwaketse. Between 1840 and 1875, the Bakwena and Bangwaketse rulers expanded their domains in two ways:

- firstly, they controlled trading access to game products
- secondly, they provided refuge to SAR Batswana seeking to escape Boer rule.

As we saw in Chapter 7, both **merafe** used guns bought from traders to defend their independence in the 1852-53 Batswana-Boer war. Following this conflict, the Bakwena and Bangwaketse prospered as powerful regional partners.

However, later, in the 1870s, the regional balance of power was altered when three groups that had come from South Africa revolted against the Bakwena and Bangwaketse. These were the Bakgatla-ba-ga-Kgafela, Batlokwa and Balete. Together, they began fighting to assert their independence on the eastern borders of Kweneng and Gangwaketse. A costly series of wars between the *merafe* began. These wars came to a sudden halt in 1881 because whites were threatening to take over the region. So the Batswana stopped fighting and, once more began to co-operate in the face of this new threat.

In this chapter we will look at the building up of these states as well as the intra-**merafe** wars which resulted.

The Bangwaketse under Gaseitsiwe

After the death of Makaba II in 1825, the Bangwaketse remained divided for 30 years. Sebego ruled from 1825 to 1844 as regent for his nephew, Gaseitsiwe. Earlier, Gaseitsiwe's father and Sebego's brother, Tshosa, had been killed after he tried to overthrow his father, Makaba. Sebego's brilliant military leadership during the Difaqane had assured the survival of his *morafe*, but his ambition to keep *bogosi* for himself caused division. In order to protect Gaseitsiwe's claim, a number of Bangwaketse broke away under Segotshane. Sebego's death led to a deeper division when his son, Senthufe, made himself *kgosi* of his father's faction.

The Bangwaketse under both Senthufe and Segotshane fought together in the 1852-53 Batswana-Boer War. When peace was restored, both factions settled side by side in Kanye. In the same year, Gaseitsiwe succeeded Segotshane as leader of one faction, but Senthufe still refused to recognise him as a *kgosi*. Despite attempts at mediation by Montshiwa and Sechele, open fighting broke out in 1857. Senthufe was defeated and fled to Sechele. In 1859 he was allowed to return to Kanye after formally submitting to Gaseitsiwe. Thereafter, until his death in 1889, Gaseitsiwe was able to rule in peace.

Under Gaseitsiwe, Gangwaketse prospered and Kanye's population grew from about 6 000 to 20 000. Unlike the Bangwato and Bakwena, the Bangwaketse had not become heavily involved in the 1840-50s boom in ivory trading. During the 1860s, however, they took advantage of a new growth in

Source 1

Gaseitsiwe in 1865

demand for ostrich feathers. (Europeans then valued ostrich feathers as fashionable decorations for ladies' hats.)

Most of Bangwaketse's ostrich feathers were, in fact, acquired as tribute from their Bakgalagadi subjects. The feathers came from Khakea, Kokong and the Matsheng region (which includes such villages as Lehututu). During the 1860s, the Bangwaketse made big profits selling the feathers to white traders in Kanye. But, in the 1880s, the trade collapsed when Batlharo and Barolong refugees fled from the British in the northern Cape and settled in Matsheng. By then, overhunting and large-scale ostrich farming in the Cape had greatly reduced feather sales.

Draw a flow chart showing the route of an ostrich feather from the bird to a hat worn by the English prime minister's wife.

Under Gaseitsiwe, the population of Gangwaketse was expanded by the arrival of refugees from the SAR. Most refugees came in small groups that were placed into Bangwaketse wards, but a number of larger groups also arrived.

During the 1860s and 1870s, the Bangwaketse shared their territory with the powerful Barolong-boo-Ratshidi. Between 1853 and 1877, Montshiwa ruled the Barolong from Moshaneng. Although Montshiwa co-operated with Gaseitsiwe, many Bangwaketse were relieved when he left. They were afraid of having "two bulls in one kraal".

Another large immigrant group was the Bakgatla-ba-ga-Mmanaana. These Bakgatla moved to Moshupa in 1863. At the time, both the Bangwaketse and Bakwena claimed the area. When the Bakwena gave up their claim in 1880, the Ba-ga-Mmanaana *Kgosi* Pilane accepted Gaseitsiwe as paramount. He wanted to remain independent, though, and maintained his own authority as an allied ruler. In practice, the Ba-ga-Mmanaana continued to enjoy virtual independence. For this reason, Pilane and Gaseitsiwe's successors would quarrel in later years.

Draw a diagram showing the factors that contributed to the growth of the Bangwaketse state under Gaseitsiwe.

The Bakwena after the Batswana-Boer War

In the previous chapter we saw how the Bakwena defeated the Boers and finally achieved peace.

The two decades that followed the 1853 truce with the Boers was also a time of relative peace and prosperity for Kweneng. By 1874, its population had risen to some 65 000, many of whom were recent refugees from the SAR.

In the decade after the war, most of Kweneng's population lived closely together in the Dithejwane Hills surrounding Sechele's fortress at Dithubaruba. In 1864, Sechele moved his capital to Molepolole Hill. At the same time, a number of the *merafe* who had joined the Bakwena during the war founded new settlements in south eastern Botswana.

The Ba-ga-Mmanaana moved to Moshupa and the Balete and Bahurutshe-boo-Mokhibidu went to Mmankgodi. Later, in 1875, the Balete relocated at Ramotswa. The Bahurutshe-boo-Manyana founded Manyana, next to the old battle site at Dimawe and the Batlokwa eventually settled at Moshaweng (now called Tlokweng). Smaller settlements were also founded by combinations of Bakwena and other groups in such places as Kopong, Kumakwane, Lentswe-le-Tau and Lephepe.

Before the British occupation of Botswana in 1885, Molepolole rivalled the Bangwato capital, Shoshong, as the region's leading commercial centre. Although there were virtually no elephants in Kweneng, ivory remained a major trade commodity. Every year, Sechele organised hunting parties to shoot elephants in the Chobe region. Outsiders also sold their ivory in Molepolole, which, by the 1870s, was a base for six trading companies.

Like the Bangwaketse, leading Bakwena also profited by selling ostrich feathers. Most of these feathers were brought to Molepolole as tribute from subjugated Bakgalagadi and Khoe *malata* in the central and western Kgalagadi. Many karosses or wild animal skins were also acquired and traded in this way. Some Bakwena became skilled kaross sewers and their products were exported as far away as Europe and North America.

Trace the path of a kaross from central Kgalagadi to New York, via Molepolole.

Sechele's diplomacy

Between 1853 and 1875, Sechele remained the most important leader in Botswana. By using diplomacy as well as the power of his guns, he was able to manipulate the affairs of neighbouring *merafe*. Between 1857 and 1859, he co-operated with the Barolong *Kgosi* Montshiwa in supporting the consolidation of Gaseitsiwe's rule over the Bangwaketse. Subsequently, he and Gaseitsiwe assured the peaceful succession of his son-in-law, Pilane, to the Bakgatla-ba-ga-Mmanaana throne. Sechele, Gaseitsiwe and Montshiwa again worked together to secure their eastern borders from the potential of renewed Boer aggression. In the west, they divided control over the Kgalagadi ostrich feather and skins trade.

Sechele's diplomatic skills were also applied within Kweneng. He interfered little in the affairs of the refugee groups that migrated into his country. Among the Bakwena, Sechele strengthened the political and economic influence of commoners in order to prevent his royal relatives from having too much power.

Even the status of the Bakgalagadi improved. When his own daughter Gagoangwe blinded a Mokgalagadi servant girl in one eye, Sechele had her brought before his *kgotla*. There he quoted the biblical passage, "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth". Then he shocked his people by having Gagoangwe also blinded in one eye. On another occasion when he accidentally killed a servant, Sechele insisted on being tried for murder. In these ways, the life and limb of all people in Kweneng came to be respected.

Sechele and the Bangwato

Sechele wanted very much to have a co-operative person ruling the Bangwato. As one missionary noted at the time:

Source 2

It is the lifelong endeavour of Sechele to obtain such influence in the town of the Bamangwato as would enable him to secure some of its treasures of ivory and ostrich feathers and furs which are brought from its extensive hunting grounds, extending northward to the Zambese.

Unfortunately for Sechele, the Bangwato rulers proved to be independently minded. Between 1857 and 1872, Sechele intervened four times to overthrow the rulers of Gammangwato. As part of the process, he established peaceful relations with the Amandebele. Sechele's efforts began in 1857. With the aid of LMS missionary, Robert Moffat, Sechele secured the release of his brother-in-law, Matsheng, who had been captured by Mzilikazi in 1842. As the senior-ranking son of *Kgosi* Kgari, Matsheng was the heir to the Bangwato throne. Sechele and senior Bangwato installed Matsheng in place of his half-brother, Sekgoma, as the rightful *kgosi* at Shoshong. Sekgoma then came to live under Sechele, which resulted in the conversion of his eldest son, Khama, to Christianity. Sechele also travelled to Bulawayo, where he convinced Mzilikazi to allow missionaries to work in his country.

Matsheng quickly became unpopular in Shoshong by behaving like an Amandebele, rather than a Motswana, ruler. As a result, in 1859, Sechele restored Sekgoma to the throne, exiling Matsheng to Kweneng. Sechele once more intervened to reinstall Matsheng in 1866, taking back Sekgoma. Matsheng's second reign was more popular with the Bangwato, but he foolishly interfered with trade going to the Amandebele. To keep the trade route to the north open, Sechele decided to depose Matsheng once more, this time installing Khama as *kgosi* in 1872. Matsheng died shortly thereafter.

After further conflict with Sekgoma, Khama consolidated his rule over Gammangwato in 1875. But, for some time Khama remained in Sechele's shadow. Besides playing host to the exiled Sekgoma, Sechele married Matsheng's widow in 1883. He thus became the guardian of the late Matsheng's son, Kgari.

1. What do you believe was Sechele's motive in intervening in Bangwato politics between 1857 and 1872? Use at least one piece of primary evidence from this section as a starting point for your discussion.

2. What was Sechele's role in Khama's rise to power?

The coming of the Bakgatla-ba-ga-Kgafela

In 1870, several thousand Bakgatla-ba-ga-Kgafela refugees migrated into eastern Kweneng under their *kgosi*, Kgamanyane. Like earlier migrants, the Ba-ga-Kgafela had found Boer rule in the SAR intolerable. They had lived in the Pilanesberg region for generations before they fell under Boer rule in 1840s. Thereafter, the *Kgosi* Kgamanyane had to send men to fight in Boer wars against other, still independent, Africans. He also was forced to send men to work without pay on Boer farms.

Over time, these Boer demands on the Ba-ga-Kgafela became too much. In April 1870, Kgamanyane refused to provide the major Boer landowner in the Pilanesburg, Paul Kruger, with additional labourers. In response, Kruger had Kgamanyane tied to a wagon wheel and whipped in front of his people. So in November 1870, many Ba-ga-Kgafela left the Pilanesberg when Sechele agreed that Kgamanyane could settle at Mochudi, which was then part of eastern Kweneng.

At that time, Paul Kruger was SAR Commandant-General. Paul Kruger later became President of the SAR and is regarded as a hero by many Boers for his role in the Anglo-Boer War. Here we see a different side of the man.

Until Kgamanyane's death in 1875, the Ba-ga-Kgafela and Bakwena lived in peace at Mochudi. But Kgamanyane's successor, Linchwe I, was willing to fight to restore his *morafe's* independence and prosperity. Linchwe made alliances with two other local groups, the Batlokwa and Balete. He then allowed his men to start stealing Bakwena cattle in order to

provoke a fight. He succeeded. After Ba-ga-Kgafela were caught with cattle stolen from Sechele's cattlepost on the Notwane, the Bakwena demanded war. Sechele tried to have the matter settled peacefully, calling on the Ba-ga-Kgafela to send him a token tribute of a wagonload of sorghum. Linchwe refused.

Intra-*merafe* wars

In August 1875, the Bakwena, accompanied by their Bakaa and Ba-ga-Mmanaana allies, attacked Mochudi under the command of Sechele's son, Sebele. The resulting battle was a great victory for the Ba-ga-Kgafela, who had established a strong defensive position in the centre of Mochudi on Phutladikobo Hill. Like the Bakwena, the Ba-ga-Kgafela were well armed. Many of them had worked on the Kimberley diamond fields and bought guns there. Ba-ga-Kgafela spies had also robbed the Bakwena of what they had planned as a surprise attack. Sebele is said to have acted in a cowardly manner during the battle, while the Ba-ga-Mmanaana may not have been eager to fight with fellow Bakgatla. In the end, the Bakwena retreated, after losing up to 120 men, while the Ba-ga-Kgafela lost about a dozen defenders.

The Ba-ga-Kgafela victory was the beginning of a long struggle that brought much misery to southern Botswana.

In November 1875, a second major battle was fought at Thamaga between the Ba-ga-Mmanaana on one side and the Ba-ga-Kgafela and Balete on the other. The Ba-ga-Mmanaana were victorious. Among the Ba-ga-Kgafela fatalities was Maganelo, another son of Kgamanyane's who had been challenging Linchwe's right to become *kgosi*.

A third major battle was fought on the outskirts of Molepolole in July 1876. The Ba-ga-Kgafela, Batlokwa and Balete had launched a massive raid on Bakwena cattleposts west of

Molepolole. While trying to return home with the cattle, they were ambushed by Sechele's men, who were armed with a new shipment of rifles. These new guns were breechloaders, which fired much more rapidly than the old style muskets. The raiders were defeated. Sechele ordered a cease-fire after about a hundred of his enemies were killed. Linchwe was personally rescued by the Batlokwa prince, Gaborone, after being wounded.

1. What is the difference between a musket and a breechloader?

2. Why do you think the Bakgatla used muskets and the Bakwena used rifles?

3. Why might Sechele have ordered his men to stop fighting?

Following the battle of Molepolole, the war turned into a stalemate with the Bakwena and Bangwaketse on one side, the Ba-ga-Kgafela, Batlokwa and Balete on the other, and groups like the Ba-ga-Mmanaana and Bahurutshe sometimes in the middle. Cattle raids and small skirmishes broke periods of truce. Only one other major battle took place. This was in 1881, when the Bangwaketse and the Ba-ga-Mmanaana launched a disastrous attack on the Balete at Ramotswa. Although the level of fighting remained modest, it was accompanied by enormous suffering. Hunger increased as people feared to watch over their fields. Raiding parties killed and mutilated men, women and children. Bakgalagadi herders were especially at risk on isolated cattleposts. In September 1876, a Molepolole missionary wrote that Sechele

Source 3

Has suffered very heavy losses of cattle, the people are unable to go hunting, the harvest was a failure and worst of all, many lives have been sacrificed and the most revolting murders have been practised.

During the war, the Ba-ga-Kgafela, Balete and Batlokwa had the advantage that they could send their cattle to their relatives living in the SAR. Meanwhile the Bakwena cattle remained vulnerable. In 1876, the SAR Boer state was on the brink of collapse and no longer able to control their borders. After 1877, when the British annexed the SAR, the border was closed.

The British withdrawal from the SAR in 1881 led to a brief upsurge in fighting, which failed to give any of the *merafe* a decisive advantage. The following year peace was finally and permanently restored to the region.

Some Bakwena say peace between the Bakwena and Ba-ga-Kgafela began when one of Sechele's junior sons, Sebogiso, decided on his own to return to Molepolole from the SAR via Mochudi. Once in the village, he went direct to Linchwe's **kgotla**. After questioning Sebogiso, Linchwe decided to send him back to Sechele with a message that a Ba-ga-Kgafela delegation would follow him to pray for the dead Bakwena. Sechele welcomed and reciprocated the gesture.

Source 4

Thereafter, the Bangwaketse agreed to a truce with the Balete. Soon the Bakwena, as a token of goodwill, allowed the Balete and Batlokwa to graze their cattle in Kweneng.

A factor that certainly brought the combatants together was renewed fears of white intrusion. Between 1878 and 1881, the Batlhaping and Barolong had suffered under British authority. The temporary withdrawal of the British in 1881 gave white mercenary groups the opportunity to launch a new phase of aggression with the backing of the SAR Boers. In the face of these threats, Linchwe, Gaseitsiwe and Sechele each welcomed Montshiwa's call for a new Batswana alliance.

Consequences of the wars

The restoration of peace left the Balete and Ba-ga-Kgafela practically independent, though Gaseitsiwe and Sechele continued to claim these territories. The Batlokwa once more fell under Bakwena rule.

Many lives and much wealth were lost. The intra-*merafe* wars resulted in a large decline in southern Botswana's cattle herds. Because they had lost much of their best grazing areas to the Ba-ga-Kgafela and Balete, the Bakwena and Bangwaketse had to move many of their cattle into the Kgalagadi. These places were drier and supported smaller herds. Increased

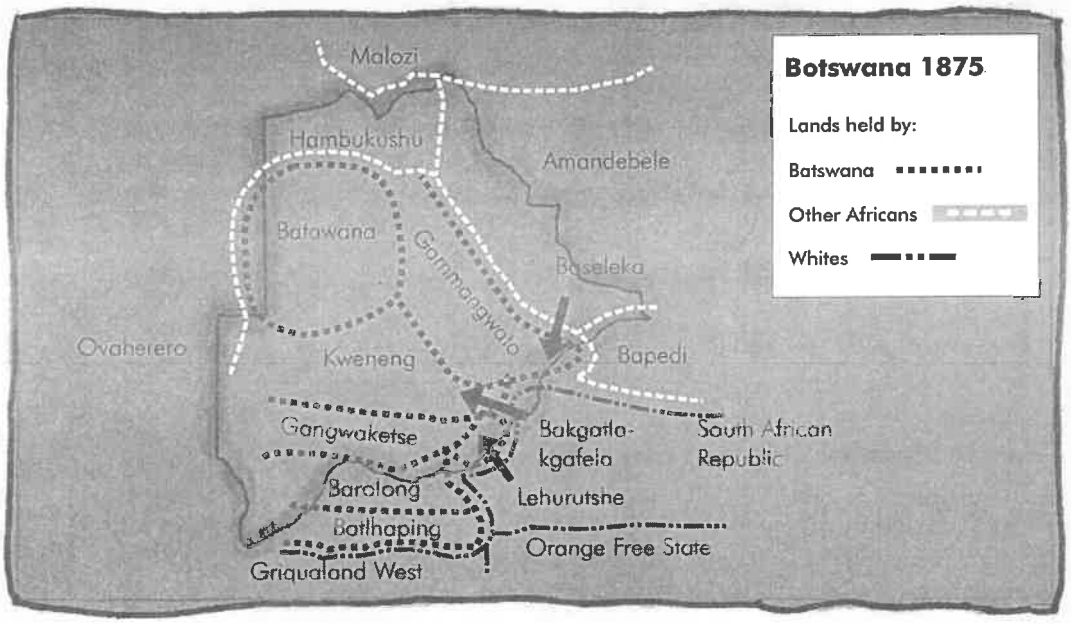
herding reduced the Kgalagadi's wildlife population and undermined the kaross trade. Meanwhile, many Bakgalagadi in the region were forced for the first time to herd cattle for their Bakwena and Bangwaketse masters.

Much of the Bakwena and Bangwaketse's previous prosperity was gone. Making matters worse, the decline in wildlife ended the ivory and ostrich feather boom. The war had also disrupted the wagon trade through Kanye and Molepolole. Much of the central trade now passed through Gammangwato to the SAR, thus avoiding southern Botswana altogether.

Do the land holdings on the map look like Botswana's borders today?

Source 5

Map of Botswana in 1875



Look at the land divisions in Botswana in 1875 in Source 5. Plan an essay explaining how this situation had come about by 1875.

How to plan a history essay

- First, try to understand what the question is asking you to do. In this question, the key word is "explaining". Other question words are why, how, evaluate, argue, discuss, compare and contrast.
- Then, look at the content you must include. You need to look at land up to 1875.
- The next step is to plan your essay in rough. It is often helpful to use a diagram or notes to do this. Here are some guidelines to think about:
  - ♦What is your point of view (an answer to the question or problem stated)? Use your answer as the introduction to your essay.
  - ♦What is all the relevant evidence that can support this point of view? Do not include evidence unless it helps to answer the question. In this question, it is no use to include information on Botswana after 1875.
  - ♦Sort out evidence (including original quotes) which supports your point of view.
  - ♦Then divide the information into smaller themes. Each theme or idea should be discussed in a separate paragraph.
- You are now ready to write your history essay. This will be discussed

What have I learnt?

1. What difficulty did Gaseitsiwe face in becoming the *kgosi* of the Bangwaketse?
2. Why did most of the Bakgatla-ba-ga-Kgafela leave the SAR in 1870?
3. a)Why did the Bakwena attack Mochudi in August 1875?
   b) What factors might have contributed to the failure of the attack?
4. Why were the Bakgatla able to protect their cattle better than the Bakwena during their war?
5. What effects did the intra-*merafe* wars have on people in the Kgalagadi?

Chapter Nine

The Batawana conquer Ngamiland

Introduction

Following the period of the Difaqane in Ngamiland, there were no strong **merafe** in the Ngamiland area.

The various peoples of the area were scattered around in small groups, each under its own leader. However, between 1840 and 1890, the Batawana gradually emerged as the rulers of the region. Under the leadership of Mogalakwe, Letsholathebe and Moremi II, they expanded their territory by conquering all the peoples of the area.

It was because of their control of the ivory trade that the Batawana became the strongest power in their region.

Batawana leaders encouraged trade with outsiders, just as Sechele had done in the south. Then they obtained weapons with the ivory, which enabled them to become a strong military force.

Ngamiland's environment and peoples

Ngamiland is a part of Botswana that is very different from the rest of the country. Its environment is distinct in that the Okavango River flows into the region and forms a large delta. It is the only part of Botswana that is not dry. Moreover, the population of Ngamiland has large numbers of people who are not Tswana in origin.

Source 1

Map of Botswana showing Ngamiland

Despite these apparent differences, Ngamiland's circumstances are not very different from those of the rest of the country. The abundance of water in the area has not made living there easy. Both mosquitoes and tsetse fly abound, spreading deadly diseases to humans and their livestock. The soil of the area is not very fertile and producing large amounts of food is impossible. Overall, Ngamiland has a low population density that has supported itself over the centuries largely through hunting and fishing.

Ngamiland's population is diverse and includes such peoples as the Wayeyi, Hambukushu, various Khoe groups, Bakgalagadi, Ovaherero and Basubia or Bekuhane. By the end of the nineteenth century, only about 15 percent of the Batawana *morafe* was of Batswana origin.

Refer to Chapters 2 and 4 for more background.

These various ethnic groups in Ngamiland were all small societies, scattered over a wide area. None of the local rulers had much power. For instance, Sankotse was the paramount *kgosi* over the majority of the Wayeyi. Likewise, Kgaraxumae was a well-known Khoe leader in eastern Ngamiland, and Lefatshe ruled the Bakgalagadi who lived near Lake Ngami. Meanwhile, the Hambukushu of Ngamiland paid tribute to chiefs living in modern-day Namibia. None of these peoples or leaders ever attempted to expand their power in the manner that the Batawana did after 1840. Ultimately, their inability to expand cost them their independence.

The Batawana during the Difaqane

Like the rest of the country, Ngamiland was disrupted by the Bakololo and Amandebele during the Difaqane. It was the Bakololo who did the most damage. See Chapter 6 for more details.

After living on the Makgadikgadi pans for several years, the Bakololo moved west to Ngamiland sometime around 1834. At first they defeated the Batawana (then known as the Bampuru), who had controlled the southern Okavango and Ghanzi. Sebetwane's Bakololo destroyed the Batawana, taking their cattle, killing the regent and making most of them prisoners. Meanwhile, a significant portion of the *morafe*, who had lived under the *kgosi*'s brother at Ghanzi, fled to Angola, where their descendants live to this day. Most of the young members of the Batawana royal family were taken away to the swamps by a group of women. They went to live with Basubia or Bekuhane in the Mababe region.

The Bakololo did not stay in Ngamiland long. After defeating the Batawana, they marched west of Ghanzi to fight the cattle-rich Ovaherero. At this point, Sebetwane suffered a major defeat. A Herero-Khoe army ambushed him and took all his cattle. Sebetwane then retreated and moved to modern-day Zambia, just north of the Chobe River. He soon conquered south western Zambia. With him were the Batawana and

many others taken from Botswana, some of whom he sold to Angolan slave dealers. From Zambia, Sebetwane continued to extract tribute from Chobe and the northern Okavango Delta.

A little before 1840, various Batawana began to escape from Bakololo custody. Then a large group escaped and went to the Chobe area. The runaways found the young Letsholathebe alive among the Basubia. Led by a senior *kgosana*, Mogalakwe, the Batawana then returned to the Toteng area where they grouped themselves with Bakgalagadi and other Difaqane refugees.

At this point, the Batawana were scarcely a big force. But over the next 50 years, they defeated the Bakololo, ending up controlling all of Ngamiland.

The Batawana conquer the region

Around 1840, Mogalakwe, the regent, introduced three practices that proved vital to the spread of Batawana power:

- *Kgamelo* was a system of political control devised by *Kgosi* Kgari of the Bangwato before the Difaqane. According to this system, the *kgosi* would loan large numbers of cattle out to headmen. In return, the headmen became the servants of the *kgosi*. If they failed to follow orders, the *kgosi* could exile the headmen and take their property. Headmen were also allowed to lend out cattle given to them by the *kgosi* and so a system of political control emerged that was based on cattle. *Kgamelo* gave the *kgosi* great power over his headmen, who in turn commanded obedience from those below them. To get the cattle necessary to begin *kgamelo*, the Batawana took them from the Khoe and Wayeyi living on the Boteti River and in the southern Okavango.

WORDS

Kgamelo ("milk-pail") are cattle lent out by the *dikgosi* of the Bangwato and Batawana to commoners whose support they wish to gain.

Kgamelo is a form of **mafisa**. Can you remember how this system worked?

- Ivory trading became important to the Batawana royal family in generating wealth. In the 1840s Mogalakwe began trading ivory with Angolans for beads and cloth. This trade became crucial to the Batawana after 1850.
- *Bolata* was also reinstituted by Mogalakwe. Conquered peoples such as Wayeyi and Khoe were expected to work for the Batawana without payment. Male *malata* herded cattle, paid tribute in biltong and skins and went on hunting expeditions where they tracked down animals and carried back the meat and ivory. Female *malata* were taken from their parents and forced to do domestic and agricultural work for their owners.

We learnt about **bolata** in Chapter 3.

Mogalakwe handed over power to his young nephew, Letsholathebe in 1847. Letsholathebe then used Mogalakwe's reforms to extend Batawana power, conquering large amounts of territory.

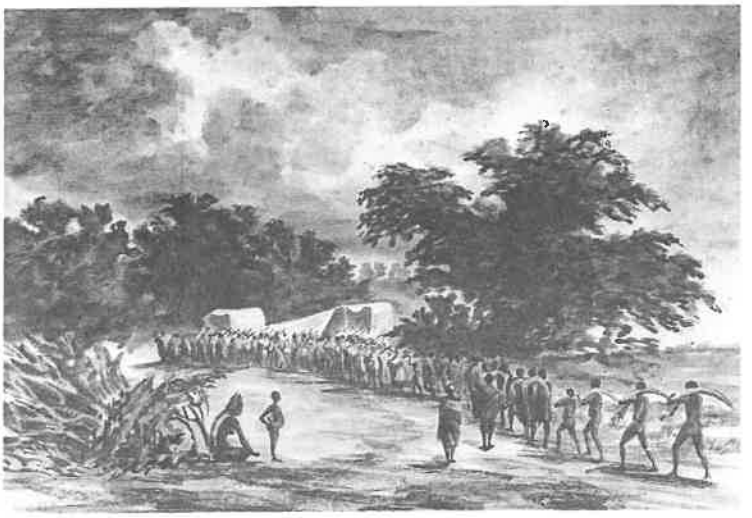
First, Letsholathebe expanded the ivory trade greatly. Hoping to get higher prices than trade with the Angolans offered, he invited the missionary David Livingstone to Ngamiland to trade in ivory. Livingstone and his Bakwena guides went to Ngamiland in 1849 and opened up the region to traders from the south. Following in the famous missionary's path were large numbers of Coloured and Europeans from the Cape Colony and South African Republic (SAR) hoping to earn money from ivory trading. Before the arrival of Livingstone, ivory had little value. Livingstone wrote:

Source 2

I myself saw eight instances in which the tusks had been left to rot with the other bones where the elephant fell. The Batuana never had a chance of a market before; but in less than two years after our discovery (of Lake Ngami), not a man of them could be found who was not keenly alive to the great value of the article.

Source 3

Painting by Thomas Baines of Letsholathebe bringing his ivory to Lake Ngami to trade



What allowed the Batawana to increase their territory were the trade items brought by these foreigners.

Letsholathebe tried to purchase guns and horses at every opportunity. He could easily afford these as he claimed half of all ivory collected in Ngamiland. Even a small number of men could dominate a large area if they owned all the guns and horses. In this way, the ivory trade brought Letsholathebe and

his Batawana great military power.

Letsholathebe first expanded into the region north east of the Okavango, the Mababe and Chobe region, which had big elephant herds. The Batawana began killing Bakololo tax collectors in the area and taking tribute from the local population. Of course, the Bakololo responded and sent a large army to defeat their former servants. In 1854, this army attacked Toteng but suffered a major defeat. All the Batawana had to do was wait at the top of a hill and kill their spear-carrying attackers with their guns. After 1854, the Bakololo presented no more problems to the Batawana as they were too afraid to attack again.

Kgosi Letsholathebe next took Ghanzi, whose Naro-Khoe had stolen huge numbers of Batawana cattle during the Bakololo battle. In 1858 Letsholathebe killed the Naro-Khoe leader, Dukuri, during supposed peace talks. Then he turned the population of the Ghanzi area into *malata*.

Between 1860 and 1880, Letsholathebe gradually established control over the Wayeyi who lived across the Delta. The Wayeyi lived in scattered communities and were not unified. For this reason, they were easily defeated by Batawana aggressors, who were actually a much smaller group.

Hunting elephants became the main occupation of the Batawana after 1850 and large parties of hunters went out regularly to shoot them. Usually the Batawana hunters rode on horses, while Khoe and Wayeyi porters walked, carrying the food and water. Once elephants were found, the Khoe and Wayeyi stalked them with dogs. This was a dangerous business and the hunters often tried to force the elephants toward swampy areas where they would be slowed down. Then the Batawana rode in and killed them with a huge barrage of bullets. Once the animals were killed, an even tougher task began - the carrying of the tusks and biltong back to Toteng. It was the Khoe and Wayeyi who performed this exhausting duty and many died of exhaustion due to the heavy loads.

Many thousands of elephants were killed in Ngamiland and later only animals in the remotest regions were left alive.

Today the trade in ivory has been banned to prevent poaching of elephants, and thus to preserve this species. However, the flip side to this ban has been that African countries can no longer raise funds for their National Parks by selling the ivory from culled elephants. Research this issue, finding information to support both sides.

When you do a research project of this nature, you will have to combine information from several different sources. This is a useful historical skill, which will only improve with practice.

How to combine information from different sources:

1. Read through the different sources of information that you have found. These could be books or articles from newspapers and magazines.
2. Pick out what you think are the most important points in each source. Keep your topic clearly in mind as you do this. Write down these points, using your own words. You could write up these notes in the form of a diagram (see Chapter 2), especially if you are planning an essay (see Chapter 8).
3. Compare the information you have found, looking for similarities and differences.
4. Group together all the information that is the same from the different sources. Then add each extra piece of information that you find in the sources. In this way you are combining the information.
5. Sources sometimes do contradict each other. You can decide if one source is more accurate than others are. Or you could include the conflicting information to show different points of view.
6. Write up the information in the form required.

Profits from the trade went largely to the Batawana royals. In addition to buying guns and horses, the wealthy Batawana bought wagons, European clothes and began drinking tea and coffee with sugar. The *kgosi's* wives, who had looked little different from other Batawana women in 1850, soon distinguished themselves from the masses. By 1880 they dressed in fine clothes and were surrounded by female *malata* who cooled them with fans made from ostrich feathers and attended to their needs. In the evenings they ate the tastiest meat and other imported delicacies. No longer did they cultivate fields and build houses like the commoners.

Source 4

Letsholathebe dining with a European trader

Some people think that the European traders cheated the Batswana by giving very low prices for ivory, but this is not true. All the Batawana chiefs knew that ivory was valuable and so demanded much in return. One veteran ivory trader wrote:

Source 5

Many of the colonial gentlemen who wish to appear well acquainted with the method of procuring ivory but who are as ignorant in reality as one who could not discern the difference between the jaw bone of an elephant and that of a whale, seem to think that a trader has only to make his way to Lake Ngami . . . and, by practising the most gross impositions upon the native possessors of ivory, has an easy task of loading up his wagons and returning home (a rich man).

In reality, not many white ivory traders made big profits. Prices in Cape Town and London went up and down. Only those traders who bought ivory in large quantities and who were good friends of the Batawana chiefs made any significant money.

The lot of the Batawana elite improved through ivory sales; however, the same could not be said for the *malata*. They were treated with great cruelty. Herders whose beasts died or strayed were liable to be killed or tortured. Hunters who failed to provide enough tribute had their children taken and sold. In fact, the Batawana were probably the only *morafe* that sold its *malata* in large numbers. Letsholathebe sold several hundred youngsters, mainly Wayeyi and Khoe boys, to Boers from the Zeerust area of the SAR.

Referring to Sources 3-5, discuss the importance of the ivory trade in the rise of the Batawana.

By the time Letsholathebe died in 1874, the Batawana were the unrivalled masters of Ngamiland. No one posed them any threat.

The rule of Moremi II (1877-90)

Letsholathebe was eventually succeeded by his son, Moremi, in 1877. Moremi, born to Letsholathebe's second wife, did not change the policies of his father.

Can you remember what these policies were?

His land continued to be the centre of elephant hunting, while regiments conquered more land along the western side of the Okavango Delta. During the course of his reign, he shared out this territory to a new group of headmen, who also took *kgamelo* from him. These headmen were all recent immigrants to Ngamiland from the south. They opened up large new grazing areas, where Batawana cattle increased rapidly. These headmen were known as the *basimane ba kgosi* (the chief's boys).

Plan and write an essay describing the factors that led to the rise of the Batawana from 1840 to 1874. Try to combine information from different sources.

The Batawana had won a large number of battles following their victory over the Bakololo in 1854. It was only in 1882 that they were seriously challenged again. In that year, the Amandebele sent a large raiding party across the desert to Ngamiland to steal their cattle. This was something that the Amandebele did regularly, as their king relied heavily on his *amabutho* (regiments) to move around southern Africa to bring him cattle.

In 1882, the Amandebele forces succeeded in surprising the Batawana and were able to capture many cattle from the Boteti River and Lake Ngami areas. In doing so, they burned villages, killed innocents and took large numbers of women and children with them. Two years later, they tried to do the same again, but this time they were spotted well in advance and the Batawana had a plan to defeat them.

When the Batawana heard that the Amandebele were on their way, they began removing cattle and their people to the north. Meanwhile, a group of gunmen on horseback harassed the Amandebele troops and slowly lured them into a well-prepared trap. The horsemen retreated toward a swampy area, east of Nokaneng. At this point the Taoghe River was wide and deep and an island known as Khutiyabasadi provided the site for an ambush.

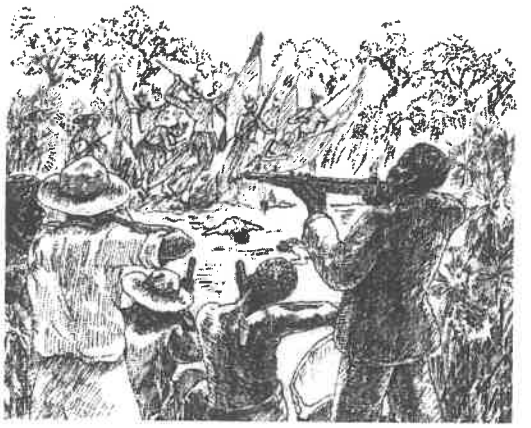
The Batawana joined forces with the Wayeyi who were very skilled in the wet environment. Together they retreated across the river using canoes and makeshift bridges. Because the banks of the island were lined with very high reeds, several Batawana regiments were able to hide behind them. They also dug a huge tunnel into the side of the island where many more men waited. Eventually, the Amandebele arrived near the trap, but they were unwilling to cross as they could not swim. The Batawana let a few cattle loose and had several men show themselves to the enemy. This succeeded in getting the Amandebele men to charge and all the warriors ran into the river. They were met by a volley of rifle fire, but, more importantly, the Amandebele found the water too deep for them as they were unable to swim. Wayeyi canoeists then left the island and proceeded to drown the Amandebele men. Huge numbers of Amandebele died in this battle and of about

2 500 who left for Ngamiland, only a thousand returned to Bulawayo.

The victory over the Amandebele was a triumph for Moremi. But the Wayeyi, who had dominated the battle due to their knowledge of the swamps, ended up worse off. Moremi moved his capital from Toteng to near Nokaneng on the edge of the delta. This allowed Moremi to keep the Wayeyi under much closer supervision than he had done previously.

Source 6

The Battle of Khutiyabasadi



Due to the military confidence gained from this battle, Moremi tried further expansion the next year. In 1885 he was asked for military help by Lewanika, who had been deposed in 1884 as *kgosi* of the Balozi. (In 1861 the Bakololo had been destroyed by the Lozi, who then controlled the south western Zambia area. Batswana call them *Marotse* or *Barotse*.) Moremi took a large force up to southern Zambia. On arrival, he found that Lewanika had regained power already, having defeated one of his younger brothers.

But the expedition had not been made in vain. Lewanika gave Moremi access to excellent hunting grounds north of the Chobe River where big game was still plentiful. Moremi also appealed to Lewanika not to execute the leaders of the faction that had originally overthrown him. So Lewanika gave Moremi these people to keep as slaves and they accompanied the Batawana back to Ngamiland where they were distributed among Moremi's relatives. In addition, Moremi decided to return to Ngamiland via the Hambukushu capital, which he wished to conquer. The Mbukushu king at Andara decided not to fight the Batawana and agreed to be ruled by Moremi. He then sent headmen to control the area. So, by 1885, the Batawana had conquered the entire area of modern Ngamiland.

"Moremi continued to build on the foundations that his father had laid." Comment on this statement in connection with the rise of the Batawana.

Social life

All of the descriptions of nineteenth century Ngamiland are written by European travellers, so it is difficult to describe the lifestyle, feeling and thoughts of the inhabitants of Ngamiland at that time.

In what kinds of sources do you think we can find these descriptions? Why do you think they are so unreliable?

Due to the large number of ethnic groups who lived there, Ngamiland was a diverse area. The Wayeyi, the largest group, were engaged primarily in agricultural production. They grew sorghum and may have been Botswana's first maize producers. Wayeyi also exploited the swamps by hunting and fishing. The Bakgalagadi were known for hunting and the production of skins and karosses, which they traded over wide areas. Khoe men also focused on hunting, while their wives gathered wild fruits. Meanwhile, the Batawana were known for hunting with guns and cattle owning.

These groups had similar lifestyles. Hunting was important to all groups, but the Batawana had a lot more guns to hunt with. Most Khoe in Ngamiland were not full-time hunters. Those on the Boteti River kept cattle, while the Qana-Khoe in the swamps concentrated on fishing. It was also a common practice for Khoe to leave the desert to come and help the farmers at harvest time. In return for this labour, they received part of the crop. Even Batawana women often went into the bush to gather wild fruits wherever food stocks were low. Moreover, all these groups traded among one another for foodstuffs, meat, tobacco, metal goods, crafts and jewellery.

Due to their increased power, the Batawana began to impose their culture on members of the other groups. Tswana laws replaced the legal systems of other groups, men of conquered *merafe* were placed into *mephato*, while the formal leaders of

the conquered groups were stripped of power and maintained only informal status.

Under such influences, the Wayeyi and the Hambukushu began to change their systems of organisation. Both groups were originally matrilineal, in that they traced their descent from their mother's side only.

Obviously, the matrilineal system conflicted with the Tswana system where descent is traced through the father. Today, the Wayeyi and Hambukushu no longer trace descent through their mother's side.

As Batawana power increased, it became increasingly desirable to become known as a Motawana. Within Batawana society, it was felt important that one's ancestry was pure. All sorts of people made the attempt to become real Batawana. They sought marriages with old families or forged economic links with them. Meanwhile, those who were not seen as Batawana were looked down upon. The Wayeyi were called Makoba, and all sorts of people came to be known as Masarwa. These were labels that had not been known before the mid-nineteenth century.

Today many of these minority groups are empowering themselves and reclaiming their identity. Look back at the activity you completed on the Wayeyi Cultural Movement in Chapter 4.

WORDS

According to the **matrilineal** system (which is common from Zambia northwards), the relatives of a person's mother take precedence over the relatives of a person's father. Your mother's brothers thus act as your principal guardians.

Do you still find the terms "makoba" and "masarwa" in use today? Are they still derogatory terms? Conduct a quick class survey to test opinion.

1885-90: Civil war and the approach of colonial rule

Ngamiland did not become part of the Bechuanaland Protectorate in 1885. This was because in 1885 the British were mainly interested in securing southern Botswana, which stood between the Germans in Namibia and the Boer-ruled South African Republic.

The country that wanted to colonise Ngamiland the most was, in fact, Germany. Germany had claimed Namibia (formerly South West Africa) as a colony in 1884 and, during the next few years, struggled to take control. In the meantime, a number of German soldiers, traders and missionaries ventured into Ngamiland. By the late 1880s, the German government was anxious to expand into Ngamiland.

In the end, however, Ngamiland went to Great Britain. This was due to two concessions that Moremi signed with British traders in the late 1880s:

- The first of these, the Nicholls Hicks concession, was signed in 1889. It gave three white men the right to look for minerals in Ngamiland and to mine if they located any.
- A second treaty, the Austral Africa concession, gave the same men similar mineral rights in the Ghanzi area.

When Britain and Germany sat down in 1890 to divide parts of Africa between themselves, Britain's claim to Ngamiland was upheld over German claims. The Germans, though, were able to negotiate for the Caprivi Strip, which included a great deal of Batawana and Basubia land.

In 1889, the year before colonial rule came to Ngamiland, a split occurred among the Batawana. One of Moremi's brothers, Sekgoma, took up arms in order to gain *bogosi*. Sekgoma was the son of Letsholathebe's seventh wife, a Mongwato woman of royal birth. Sekgoma always claimed that his mother was the *mohumagadi*. Whatever the truth of the matter, his mother had died when he was born, and another woman had assumed the title of *mohumagadi* for herself. This woman, the mother of Moremi, was, in fact, a Mongwaketse pretending to be a pure Motawana.

In 1889, while Moremi was out hunting with his regiment, the 17-year-old Sekgoma took over the capital, Kamokaku, with the help of his supporters. Sekgoma, a tough, intelligent and ambitious young man, appealed to those people who wanted to get rid of the fat and alcoholic Moremi. Sekgoma was able to control the capital for some months, before being ejected.

He returned some months later with a new force, but was defeated in a bloody encounter.

Sekgoma then retreated to the swamps. The following year, not long after the British government declared its control over Ngamiland, his brother died. Young Sekgoma was soon instituted as his successor.

However, the rift between Sekgoma's men and the supporters of Moremi's family was not to be healed for many years, as will be seen in later chapters.

What have I learnt?

1. Why was Mogalakwe important to the growth of Batawana power?
2. a) What product did the Batawana specialise in?
   b) What did they sell it for?
   c) Find some sources in this chapter which support your answers.
3. What duties did *malata* perform for their masters?
4. Describe how the Batawana *dikgosi* controlled land.
5. How did the Batawana defeat the Amandebele in 1884?
6. What were the results of Moremi's visit to Bulozi in 1885?
7. Did the various *merafe* in Ngamiland have different lifestyles? Explain your answer.
8. Why did the Germans not become the rulers of Ngamiland?
9. Who was Sekgoma? Why did he revolt against Moremi?
10. Draw up a time line showing the events between the years 1840-1890 in Ngamiland.

Chapter Ten

The Bangwato and their neighbours

Introduction

The events that took place between 1840 and 1885 in what is now the Central District of Botswana were quite similar to those that were taking place in Ngamiland.

When you have finished working through this chapter, come back and see whether you agree with this statement.

The Bangwato, a small *morafe* like the Batawana, were able to conquer a huge area of land containing a population much larger than their own. In doing so, they controlled the ivory and ostrich feather trade. By 1885 the Bangwato were Botswana's largest and most powerful morafe.

Gammangwato before 1840

Early in the nineteenth century, a large number of people lived in the Gammangwato area, later called the Central District. These included Bakalanga, Batswapong and Babirwa. Other Batswana groups like Bakaa and Bakhurutshe, as well as Bakgalagadi and Khoe, also lived in the Central District. Most of these people lived by a combination of hunting, herding and raising crops, and they all traded among themselves.

Before 1830, none of these groups were in control of a large area. The Bangwato ruled various Bakgalagadi, Khoe and Bakalanga in the Shoshong area. After 1817, *Kgosi* Kgari I tried hard to make the Bangwato more powerful. He introduced the *kgamelo* system to make cattle royal property. Those animals were then given to headmen who owed the *kgosi* total allegiance. This system worked because the

Bangwato had big cattle herds. *Bolata* was also used to exploit conquered peoples. But Kgari was defeated and killed at the hands of the Bakalanga Banyayi in 1826.

These policies were also used by another kgosi. Can you remember by whom?

Following Kgari's death, the Bakololo caused a great deal of chaos by killing many people and stealing cattle. Large numbers of people were forced to migrate to safer places to avoid attacks. The Bakololo had left in the early 1830s, but in 1837, the Amandebele arrived and did far more damage than the Bakololo. The Bakaa, Bakalanga and Batswapong were forced to live in caves, while the Bangwato lived on high hills. Grown men carrying spears and shields, were forced to herd their own cattle.

With the Amandebele living north east of the Bangwato after 1840, the threat of war was always present. But the Bangwato began to assert themselves under the leadership of Kgari's son, Sekgoma I. In 1842 the Amandebele sent a raiding party against the Bangwato, who retreated - they fled to the caves and left their cattle behind for the taking. A young Mongwato then made a stirring speech to his fellow warriors.

Emboldened by this talk, the Bangwato men left the cave, recaptured their cattle and drove off the Amandebele. In 1849 another Amandebele threat was also thwarted. Just prior to the arrival of Mzilikazi's men, the Bangwato obtained a huge load of ivory, which they exchanged for muskets. Sekgoma had a dozen Amandebele tax collectors killed, and had his men drive away the others. For the next four decades, free from the threat of the Amandebele, Sekgoma managed to bring the entire Central District under his rule through a combination of diplomacy and military power.

Trade increases and the Bangwato become more powerful

After 1844, the region's focus changed. Instead of worrying about the Amandebele, hunting elephants became the new occupation. Although white traders had visited the Bangwato in the early 1830s, large-scale ivory trading only began in 1844. Soon, large numbers of traders and hunters from South Africa arrived in Gammangwato. Sekgoma, like Letsholathebe of the Batawana, controlled this trade.

Due to his desire to expand his control of trading, Sekgoma began to conquer his neighbours. In 1848 he defeated the Malete chiefs who ruled the diverse population of the Tswapong Hills. A year later he conquered the Bakaa, who then fled to the Kweneng.

Next, Sekgoma began to look to the Khoisan and Bakgalagadi in the eastern Kgalagadi and Boteti areas, which were fertile hunting grounds. Meanwhile, the Bangwato themselves hunted in elephant-rich areas around the Limpopo and Motloutse Rivers, which were subjugated in the early 1850s. Expansion continued in 1857 as the Bangwato began to collect tribute from the Bakalanga to the north east.

Chapter 8 has already outlined how **Kgosi** Sechele of the Bakwena began to interfere in the political affairs of the Bangwato because he wanted to obtain part of the riches from the hunting trade of the Bangwato region.

Sechele (with Mzilikazi's blessing) installed Matsheng (the son of Kgari) into the Bangwato *bogosi* in 1857. Both leaders felt they could control the young Mongwato. Matsheng, though, disappointed Sechele by acting more like an Amandebele leader than a Motswana one. Most Bangwato disliked his performance. So in 1859 Sechele sent an army to put Sekgoma back in power. Matsheng then fled to Kweneng.

On his return to power, Sekgoma wished to be independent of both Sechele and Mzilikazi. He continued to expand

Bangwato territory. In 1863, he took tribute from the Batalaote, who were then dominated by the Amandebele. Mzilikazi sent his men to attack Shoshong in retaliation. Bangwato regiments, which had a large number of guns, repelled the attack.

This was an important victory for the Bangwato, because from then on the Amandebele made no attempt to invade or interfere with Bangwato territory. The two **merafe** thereafter lived in peace, with a large neutral zone between them.

Sechele, though, continued to interfere in Bangwato affairs. The hunting trade, which had been centred in the Kweneng in the 1850s, had now moved mainly to Shoshong. In 1864, Sechele started a campaign against Sekgoma and finally succeeded in removing him in 1866. He then installed Matsheng again, who ruled with the support of Christians in Shoshong.

Whereas in the 1850s Matsheng had failed to please any of the Bangwato, after 1866 he proved successful at regulating the growing trade of his kingdom. Large numbers of guns were imported. Hunting was carried on across Gammangwato both by Bangwato and their *malata*. Trade increased dramatically, Shoshong grew and the Bangwato became increasingly prosperous.

Shoshong, a major southern African town

Shoshong, the Bangwato capital, increased in size as it became the centre of southern Africa's hunting trade. In 1841 Shoshong had a population of about 1 500. By 1870 it was one of the biggest towns in southern Africa. According to one traveller, it was "undoubtedly the most important town in any of

the independent native kingdoms in the interior of South Africa". About 30 000 people lived there, nearly as many as in Cape Town.

Where had these people come from?

Some were European and Coloured hunters, traders and craftsmen from South Africa. They came to trade for ivory and ostrich feathers and to sell goods to the Europeans who moved through the town in transit. A large part of the new population consisted of various conquered groups forced to live in Shoshong by the Bangwato. Probably more than half the newcomers were refugees from the SAR, where Boer rule was becoming tighter. Sekgoma, who made himself wealthy in cattle through the ivory trade, influenced the newcomers by giving them mafisa cattle. They were also given fields around Shoshong, which was surrounded by kilometres of sorghum and maize. Over time the immigrants came to think of themselves as true Bangwato.

While Shoshong was the biggest town in the interior of southern Africa, it was not a pleasant place to live. The town had no sewage or sanitation system of any kind. Disease could spread quickly, especially when it rained. Almost every year large numbers of people died during the rainy season due to various illnesses.

Water was available only from a spring on the side of a nearby hill. Every day the women would have to walk up the hill and wait many hours to get water. Nor was the town that safe at night; hyenas and lions often entered Shoshong and attacked people and animals. A traveller described Shoshong as:

Source 1

Merely composed of a large collection of huts . . . The whole town is surrounded by a thick hedge of thorns, erected at considerable labour as a bulwark of defence both against surprises by a hostile tribe, and against depredations by wild animals . . . The huts are crowded together as quickly as space will permit, consequently the passages between them, which by extreme courtesy only could be called streets, are tortuous, narrow & inconvenient in the extreme. The whole place is filthy to a degree, not the smallest attention being paid to its sanitary condition, nor any measures being ever taken to remove the refuse. Excrement, bones and filth of every description lie for the most part around each hut . . . The practice of herding their cattle at night in kraals within the town adds considerably to the prevailing uncleanliness.

In fact, until this century most large human settlements around the world had similar problems as those described above in Shoshong.

Source 2

In England, during the early nineteenth century the new industrial towns were notorious for their narrow streets, poor housing, and lack of sanitation. As a result, the death rate among town dwellers was much higher than that in the rural areas. Over half of the children of factory workers died within their first year.

It is hardly surprising that many Bangwato preferred to spend their time at the **moraka** with their cattle or hunting!

Would you have enjoyed living in Shoshong? Refer to Sources 1 and 2 above to support your answer.

However, Shoshong residents lived relatively prosperous lives. They knew how to have a good time, especially once the harvest was finished in May. Young men and women had dances, which often went on until the sun came up in the morning. The inhabitants drank sorghum beer (*bojalwa*) in large quantities.

WORDS

Bojalwa refers to the traditional Tswana sorghum beer, generally having a low percentage of alcohol. It can also refer to any kind of alcohol.

A small number of Bangwato, mainly poor women, became Christians after the arrival of German and British missionaries in 1859. Prior to 1875, however, Shoshong remained a stronghold of traditional Tswana religion. There was a determined group who treated the new faith with contempt. Sekgoma had been trained by the finest *dingaka* in southern Africa and was a skilled practitioner of *bongaka*. Shoshong had many *dingaka*, to whom residents looked for help in bringing rain, protecting animals and keeping people safe from disease and the evil intentions of their enemies.

Khama becomes Bangwato *kgosi*

In the 1870s, Khama, the eldest son of Sekgoma, became the Bangwato *kgosi*.

Khama is one of Botswana's most famous historical figures. He introduced many new Christian laws to the Bangwato, many of which were copied by other **dikgosi** across the country.

Khama was born in 1835, when the Bangwato were refugees during the Difaqane. As a young man, he engaged in ivory trading and hunting and entered into partnerships with whites from South Africa. In the 1850s he was converted to Christianity by an African preacher and in 1860, was baptised by the Hermannsburg missionary, Heinrich Schulenburg.

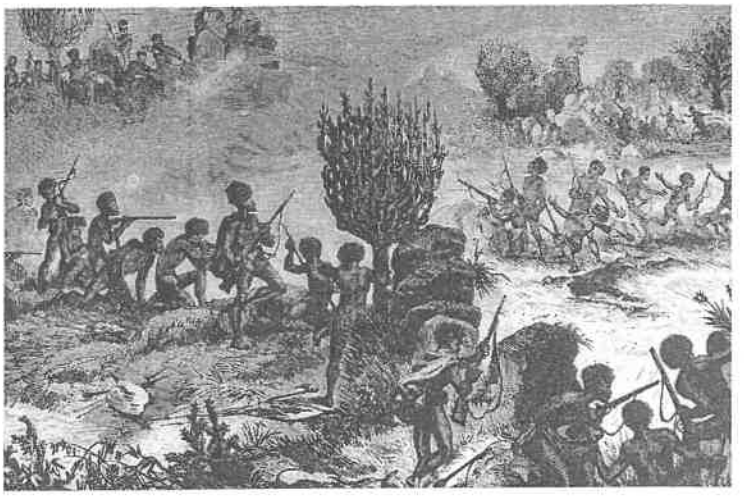
Khama was deeply devoted to the new values brought by the traders and missionaries. They, in turn, were highly impressed by him. In addition, Khama appealed to those Bangwato who engaged in trading. He was known as an honest and hard-working man of great integrity.

In 1872, he supported Sechele's plan to get rid of Matsheng (who was blocking trade with the Amandebele) and became the *kgosi* himself. Khama's first year as *kgosi* was disastrous, because he made a number of Christian reforms and forbade the brewing and drinking of alcohol. Most Bangwato, few of whom were Christians, quickly became dissatisfied by his rule. Sekgoma, Khama's father, easily displaced his son in 1873 and ruled the Bangwato for the next two years.

Unable to live under his non-Christian father, Khama went into exile in 1873. He moved to the Boteti River, followed by 2 000 supporters and most of the white traders. Khama's exodus proved unsuccessful, though, as heavy rains that year led to disastrous out-break of malaria. After a year, about half of his people had died. He returned to Shoshong in 1874 to live under his father, but in 1875 he led a revolt that made him *kgosi* again.

Source 3

Fighting between pro-Khama and pro-Sekgoma Bangwato



Why was Sechele interfering with the Bangwato chiefs? Look back to Chapter 8 for more insight.

Khama's second reign

Khama, who reigned for the next 50 years, became Botswana's most powerful leader and a famous international figure. He inherited a *morafe* that had already established its power over a huge area south of the Makgadikgadi. Khama himself had become rich through ivory hunting and trading, while his numerous *malata* herded his cattle and gave him tribute. Yet by the time he took power, few elephants were left in his territory.

After 1875, hunting became less important in the Bangwato territory. But Shoshong remained a prosperous place. Many traders used it as a base for their operations elsewhere, such as Zimbabwe or Zambia. Meanwhile, peoples living in the Bangwato territory began to specialise in making karosses from skins, and the Bakhurutshe and Batalaote made money in transport riding. Farmers such as the Batalaote bought ploughs and increased their yields of crops, which they sold in Shoshong.

Khama himself traded a great deal, exporting cattle and breeding horses. Later in life he even bought a big chain of stores. Although he taxed hunters and banned alcohol sales, he did not try to regulate trade as much as his father Sekgoma and his uncle Matsheng had done. For this, Khama was seen by whites as a good example of an enlightened African.

Khama's reforms

As a leader, Khama began to alter the laws that had regulated the Bangwato under previous leaders. He was most famous for stopping the brewing of beer and the sale of alcohol in his territory. He went to great lengths to do so and even at one point expelled almost all the white traders in his territory for disobeying him on this point. Of course, Khama was never successful in stopping beer drinking, but it was typical of his nature to try and turn his subjects into moral people. He wanted to change his people's behaviour in the way a father corrects his children:

Source 4

I have been amongst my people for a long time and they do not know what to do unless I advise them.

He did not care if the majority opposed his ideas. Though he generally did not interfere with trade, he forbade traders to give goods on credit or to charge high prices during times of famine. Sometimes he stopped grain sales so that there would be enough food in dry years. He prevented people from hunting big animals or cutting trees down without permission. Khama also ended the system of *kgamelo* and allowed such cattle to become the private property of the holders.

He also introduced a number of Christian reforms, such as forbidding people to work on Sundays. He abolished the *bogwera* and *bojale* ceremonies, as well as other non-Christian practices such as *bogadi*, rainmaking and some forms of magic. He tried to discourage men from taking a second wife and later encouraged marriages that were legally recognised by the British government. Another western practice he brought was to allow women to inherit property from their fathers.

What does Source 4 tell us about Khama's attitude to his people?

Khama was also anxious to improve his people's moral behaviour. In addition to stopping alcohol sales, he forbade all dancing at night and even stopped women walking around at night in order to reduce the potential for love affairs. Men who took concubines were censored. One traveller wrote:

Source 5

Everything in Khama's town is conducted with the rigour, one might almost say bigotry, of religious enthusiasm. The kgosi conducts in person native (church) services, twice every Sunday, in a large round kgotla, at which he expects a large attendance... He has a system of espionage by which he learns the names of those who do not keep Sunday properly and he punishes them accordingly.

"Everything in Khama's town is conducted with the rigour, one might almost say bigotry, of religious enthusiasm." Say whether you agree or disagree with the statement in Source 5 in the context of Khama's reforms. Support your answer.

Not all of Khama's laws had the effect he desired. Many of them were ignored by the Bangwato. Later, after his death, many were forgotten. But it should be recognised that Khama brought Christianity to the Bangwato for good and that he made a determined effort to change the way his people lived.

1. Would you have preferred to live in Shoshong under Sekgoma or Khama? Give reasons for your answer.

2. Do you agree or disagree with Khama's reforms? Give reasons for your answer.

The coming of the British

Traders had visited Bangwato territory since the early 1830s. However, after 1867, a great many Cape-based British citizens arrived. In that year, gold was discovered at Tati by a German, the first time a gold mine was found by Europeans in southern Africa. Large groups of white miners came up through Shoshong to find gold there. Matsheng, who was then *kgosi*, did not claim the Tati as his own land, but tried to make money by charging the miners £1 to go through his territory.

When gold was found, the Boers in the SAR tried to claim Tati and other parts of Botswana. This false claim prompted Matsheng to write to the British government to say that the Boers were lying. He also asked the British to supervise their citizens at Tati. The British, though, were not interested in looking after Tati and so did nothing.

Not much gold was ever found at Tati. After a few years, most of the miners went back to the Cape, all disappointed. A group known as the London and Limpopo Mining Company took over the mining of the area and brought in expensive steam engines to crush the gold ore. This company worked at Tati from 1871-75, but made little money and was forced to close down.

Later in the century, British miners would look for gold there again.

Although the Tati gold rush did not last long, it was important because it attracted many miners to the region. Discoveries of gold and diamonds in South Africa followed as some of these miners began prospecting for mineral wealth elsewhere.

Another result was that most of the land in today's North-East District was taken by white setters.

Further Bangwato dealings with the British occurred from 1875-76, when a group of Boer Doppers, decided to leave the SAR and trek north in search of more suitable land. Khama allowed the first trekker parties to pass through Shoshong, but he became concerned when the other two parties assembled on the Limpopo River on the border of Gammangwato and camped there for two years. They were well-armed and unfriendly. In 1876, Khama wrote to the British asking for help to stop these Boers from entering his country. In 1877, Khama allowed these two parties to pass through Gammangwato and enter the Kgalagadi to join the first two parties. When they failed to follow his advice, hundreds of Boers and their herds of cattle all died of thirst in the desert. The survivors stayed at Ghanzi for a year or so, before eventually getting to Angola.

Of all the Batswana, Khama and the Bangwato had the closest relationship with the British. They were very close to British missionaries, who supported Khama's new laws and also had early contact with the British government.

In what ways was Khama different from his father? Draw up a table of comparison.

How to draw up a table of comparison:

1. Begin by making as many columns as comparisons. In this case, you need two, one for Sekgoma and one for Khama.
2. Then decide on which criteria you wish to use to compare them. Write these in the first column. Three examples have been written in.
3. Then fill in what is true for Sekgoma and Khama.

	Sekgoma	**Khama**
Attitude to elephant hunting		
Attitude to religion	Traditional	Fervent Christian convert
Attitude to alcohol		Teetotaller

4. Complete this table on your own, adding at least two more criteria for comparison.

What have I learnt?

1. Why did the Bangwato expand their territory?
2. Once the elephants were gone, how did people make a living?
3. What laws did Khama institute as *kgosi*?
4. Who were the Doppers? How did Khama deal with them?
5. Draw up a table of comparison, comparing the rise of The Batawana and the Bangwato.

Chapter Eleven

British occupation and colonisation

In 1885 Britain occupied Botswana, beginning a period of colonial rule that lasted until 1966.

Introduction

From 1885 to 1966, Botswana was known as the Bechuanaland Protectorate. The British hoped that the word "protectorate" would reassure Batswana that they would not become a colony. Whereas colonies are countries governed by outsiders, a protectorate is supposed to be self-governing. As protected rulers, the *dikgosi* were assured that they could continue to govern their own people.

The Protectorate was imposed by the British. No *kgosi* asked for it and only three, Khama, Gaseitsiwe and Sechele, reluctantly accepted. All three knew from the experience of fellow Batswana south of the Molopo that it was impossible to resist Britain's military power.

The imperialist scramble for Africa

Between 1500 and 1900, leading European countries, such as Britain, France, the Netherlands, Portugal and Germany, which was created in 1870, established many colonies and protectorates throughout the Americas and Asia, as well as in Africa.

Imperialism came to southern Africa in the 1500s when the Portuguese began to occupy coastal areas of Angola and Mozambique. They were followed by the Dutch who established the Cape Colony, where the white settlers became known as Boers. After the British took over the Cape, some Boers migrated to re-establish their own overrule in the South

African Republic and Orange Free State. Despite such activities, most of southern Africa was still free of European rule before 1880. However, within 30 years of that date, i.e. by 1900, the entire region extending all the way to the Zambezi and beyond had fallen entirely under white control. The same pattern of imperialist expansion occurred through-out all of Africa. By 1912, Liberia and Ethiopia were the only African countries not ruled by Europeans.

WORDS

The practice of establishing colonies or imposing control over another territory or country is called **imperialism**, and the Europeans who participated in it are called **imperialists**.

Botswana's 1885 occupation was part of a wider European "scramble for Africa".

What factors contributed to the scramble for Africa?

Why would Europeans want to take over Africa?

A number of factors contributed to the scramble:

- Industrialisation in Europe created a growing demand for African minerals and agricultural products. Thus the discovery of diamonds in the Batlhaping lands of the Northern Cape caused the British to take over that area, while in southern Nigeria it was palm oil production and in Zimbabwe, the hope of finding gold.
- As European factories produced more goods, imperialists also hoped to make Africans buy their countries' industrial products. The expansion of manufactured imports into Botswana following the Difaqane encouraged such ideas. The traders themselves often looked to their home countries for support. Thus, in 1852-53, British traders had urged Sechele to appeal to their government for support against the Boers.
- Industrial era technology also encouraged imperialist expansion. The development of new weapons such as

carbine rifles, machine guns and better artillery gave European armies an advantage over Africans, including the Batswana who had acquired guns. Trains and steamships, along with new medicines like quinine for malaria, made it easier for Europeans to move people and goods through Africa. Cecil Rhodes, the leading British imperialist in southern Africa, spoke of building a railroad from Cape Town through Botswana and all the way to Cairo in Egypt.

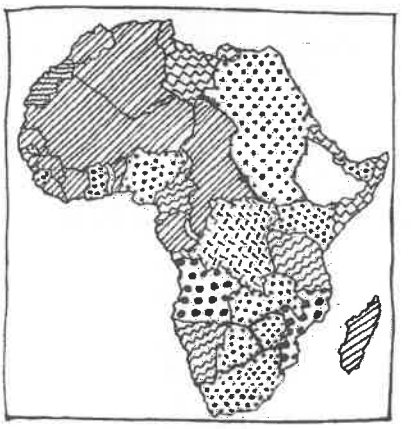
- National rivalries also encouraged the scramble. After 1870, Germany emerged to challenge Britain's position as the leading European power. In a desire to maintain their top position, as well as to generate profits, Britain hoped to exclude Germany from sharing in southern Africa's mineral wealth. The British were determined not to allow Botswana, which was in the region's centre, to come under German control.

Source 1

Map showing African colonisation in 1880

Source 2

Map showing African colonisation in 1900



The British imperialists

British imperialists were divided into two groupings. On the one hand were businessmen, civil servants and militarists in Britain who took a global view of their overseas empire. In the early nineteenth century, the British Empire was already vast, with its largest, most profitable, colonies in Asia. Before the

Use the maps in Sources 1 and 2 to comment on the term "scramble for Africa" to describe imperialism in the late nineteenth century.

discovery of diamonds and gold, the British government in London showed little interest in southern Africa beyond the strategic ports of the Cape. However, there was a growing population of both English and Afrikaans-speaking white settlers in the Cape Colony who enriched themselves by expanding northwards to seize more land and coercing more labour from Africans.

Draw a diagram to show the two different groups of British imperialists.

Griqualand West and the Botswana confederation

Because of the Batswana victory in the 1852-53 Batswana-Boer war, the **merafe** living between the Orange and Zambezi Rivers remained free of white domination and were loosely allied. Then, beginning in 1871, southern Batswana communities, mostly Barolong, Batlhaping and Batlharo, were conquered by the British. The British government took most of their land, and handed it over to white settlers.

The British colonisation of southern Batswana began with the 1871 annexation of territory containing the newly discovered diamond fields in and around Kimberley. Although over 10 000 Batlhaping lived in the Kimberley area, the British claimed that the entire region belonged to a Griqua group numbering only a few hundred who the British claimed had asked for British protection. The area became the Colony of Griqualand West. From 1876 Griqualand West, Batswana and Griqua alike were forced to live in overcrowded "locations" and most of their land was given to white settlers.

Diamonds were discovered, not in an empty land, but in the territory of the Griqua and southern Batswana. Diamonds also brought these indigenous people no wealth and much misery. They lost almost all their land to white settlers and mining companies. They lost their political independence to the British, and became the ill-treated subjects of Britons and Boers. They had to provide labour for the mines at low pay and to pay tax in European currency.

You are a Griqua living in the area where diamonds have been discovered. Describe the effects of the discovery of diamonds on your society. Try to combine information from different sources in your answer.

The formation of the confederation

The southern Batswana tried hard to resist the British takeover. In the tradition of the Batswana alliance that opposed the Boers in 1852-53, various Batlhaping *dikgosi*, along with Montshiwa of the Barolong and Gaseitsiwe of the Bangwaketse formed a confederation in 1871. Wesleyan missionary Josef Ludorf, who also served as secretary to *Kgosi* Montshiwa of the Barolong, played a direct hand in getting the confederation off the ground. Read this part of his October 1871 letter to the *dikgosi* (Batlhaping, Barolong, and Bangwaketse):

Source 3

And now chiefs: rulers of the land, I appeal to you. Awake: arise and unite soon before your trophy is torn asunder by wolves; come ye together, make protective laws; stop all breaches and gaps and close your gaps. Safeguard the heritage of Tau your ancestor. Hear ye all chiefs: Come together and unite.

Look at Source 3.

1. Say what kind of source it is.

2. How would you describe the language used in this letter? Give examples of words to support your answer.

3. a) What does Ludorf mean when he talks about a "trophy"?
b) Who are the "wolves"?
c) What are the "breaches and gaps"?
d) What is "the heritage of Tau"?

4. Can you identify any bias in this source?

Ludorf knew that the Barolong and Bangwaketse were likely to want to help the Batlhaping. Recently, in 1865 Monthsiwa and Gaseitsiwe, *kgosi* of the Bangwaketse, had joined Sechele in resist-ing an attempted Boer takeover of Lehurutshe. In November 1871 Ludorf circulated his constitution for "The United Barolong, Batlhaping and Bangwaketse Nation" and began appealing for British diplomatic recognition. Ludorf died suddenly in 1872, but the *dikgosi* continued with his plan. In the end, however, British aggression did them in.

The British take over the area

In 1878, both the Batlhaping and Griqua in Griqualand West rebelled against white domination. With their guns, the Batlhaping put up a strong resistance, defeating one enemy column on the 2 July 1878, in what came to be known as the Battle of Kho. But British firepower was far superior. The main

body of resisters was surrounded at Dithakong, which fell to invaders on 24 July 1878, after a three-hour artillery bombardment.

At this point British commander Charles Warren marched his forces all the way north to the Molopo River, claiming he was out to protect the LMS mission at Kudumane. Instead he demanded the submission of all the Batswana *dikgosi*. Those who resisted were fined, imprisoned or deposed. Warren then sent a British agent named Alex Bailie north to the Bakwena, Bangwato and Amandebele to seek their co-operation in supplying labour for the Kimberley mines. When the Bangwato *Kgosi* Khama asked for British support in keeping Boers out of his territory, Bailie interpreted it as a request for British protection. At the time, Khama was concerned about the trekkers camping near his land - see Chapter 10.

1. What do you think Khama meant by asking for British support?

2. What did Bailie think he meant?

3. Develop a role-play to show this misinterpretation.

Warren's invasion and Bailie's mission were part of a wider policy of British expansion designed to bring much of southern Africa under their control.

Between 1877 and 1881, the British army also fought the Amaxhosa, Amazulu, Basotho, Bapedi and SAR Boers. However, a change in government in London led to the British pulling back in 1881. The SAR, KwaZulu and Batswana territory north of Griqualand West were temporarily abandoned.

Wars against white mercenaries

Warren's invasion, and the flow of refugees from Griqualand West into their territories, had destabilised the Barolong and independent Batlhaping. After the 1881 withdrawal, Montshiwa and his counterpart, Mankurwane, the leading Batlhaping *kgosi*, were attacked by white mercenaries. These mercenaries, who included both Boers and British, claimed to be fighting on behalf of two *dikgosi* who had already submitted to Boer overrule. Their real interest, though, was in

WORDS

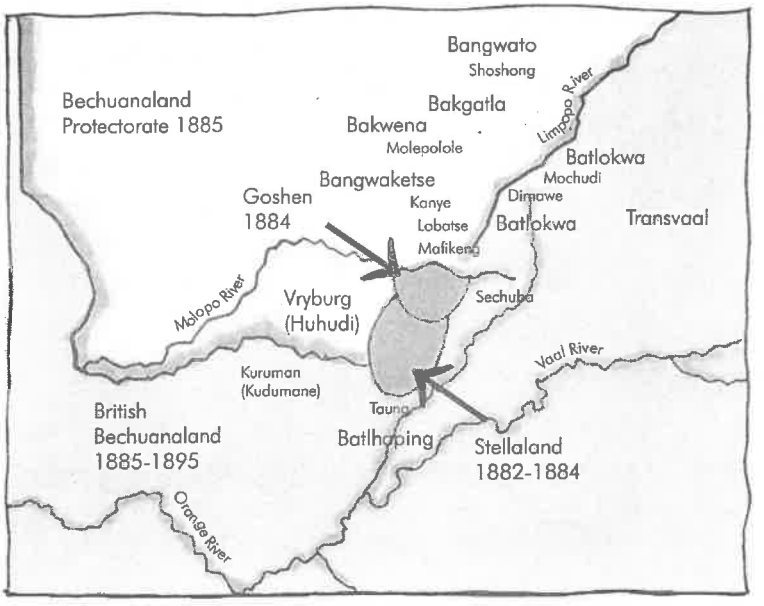
Mercenaries are soldiers for hire. They fight for anyone who pays them.

grabbing land for themselves. Mankurwane made his people's situation worse by hiring his own white mercenaries, a group who later turned on him.

In 1882 the mercenaries set up two small states, the Stellaland Republic on Batlhaping land and the Goshen Republic on Barolong land. Imperialists in the Cape Colony, led by the Kimberley mine owner, Cecil Rhodes, now joined local missionaries and traders in calling for British intervention. They maintained that the mercenaries were disrupting the flow of goods and mine labour along the trade route between the Cape Colony and central Africa and interfering with mission activity. Their arguments were strengthened in April 1884 when the Germans occupied the Namibian coast. The British now feared that the two republics would become a land link between the Germans and the SAR. They knew that the SAR's new President, Paul Kruger, was anti-British and pro-German.

Source 4

Map showing lands of Stellaland and Goshen



Compare the map in Source 4 with the map in Source 5 in Chapter 8. How has the land division changed? Give reasons for this change.

Soon afterwards, the LMS missionary, John Mackenzie, was instructed to co-operate with the Stellaland mercenaries in establishing a Bechuanaland Protectorate south of the Molopo. He failed to reach an agreement with the Stellalanders and in August he was replaced by Rhodes.

Rhodes quickly won the mercenaries' support by recognising all their land claims against the Batlhaping.

The Goshenites were less successful. Montshiwa's position was strengthened in 1883 when Gaseitsiwe, Sechele and the Bakgatla-ba-ga-Kgafela *Kgosi* Linchwe agreed to join him in a new alliance. The Goshenites were then pushed to the SAR border farm of Rooigrond. On 12 May 1884, the Barolong raided the farm and burned down the mercenaries' camp. The Goshenites retaliated, and during the raid, Montshiwa's son Makgetla was killed. Afterwards the *kgosi* told his people:

Source 5

Who think you [do you think] must die for the fatherland if not the princes? Think you [Do you think] an enemy's bullet or ball respects a king's son or that a king's son is dearer to his parents? Away with your heaviness of heart: Makgetla had died gloriously because he died as we should be prepared to die; so on with the struggle for our land and freedom.

1. What kind of evidence is in Source 5?
2. Read this speech by Winston Churchill, the British Prime Minister, during the Second World War.

I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat ... You ask, what is our policy? I will say: it is to wage war, by sea, land and air, with all our might ... You ask, what is our aim? I can answer in one word: Victory ... However long and hard the road may be.

a) What attitudes to war do the two speeches reveal?
b) What is the purpose of each speech? Are they the same or different?
c) Comment on the language and imagery used by the two leaders.

On 1 August 1884, Goshenite raiders were intercepted by Bangwaketse and Barolong near Mafikeng. A battle followed where 181 Batswana, including two white sympathisers, and some 50 Boers were killed before the raiders retreated back into the SAR.

As the Goshenites left, the SAR first, then the British, moved in. In September 1884 SAR President Kruger declared that Montshiwa had accepted SAR protection. This was the first Montshiwa had heard about it! (Kruger produced a forged document, claiming Montshiwa had marked it with an X beside his name.) Convinced Kruger was bluffing, the British sent Charles Warren and 4 000 men to secure the area in Britain's name.

1. Why did Kruger try to bluff the British?

2. Why do you think the British thought he was bluffing?

The 1885 Warren expedition

By the time Warren's forces arrived among the Batlhaping and Barolong in January 1885, the region south of the Molopo had become relatively calm. With Mackenzie serving as his advisor, Warren visited Mankurwane and Montshiwa. The two signed documents, drafted by Mackenzie, in which they agreed to submit to British overrule. Warren also met with Kruger, who promised to prevent further raids on the Protectorate from the SAR.

Warren's main task then became the enforcement of land promises made by Rhodes to the Stellalanders. By May 1886, a Land Commission, chaired by Rhodes' close associate, Sidney Shippard, had robbed the Batswana living south of the Molopo of 92% of their land: 13% of their land was awarded to the mercenaries, and 79% was taken by the British as crown land to be sold to other white settlers. Shippard, who became known to Batswana as *Morena Maaka* (Lord of Lies), became Bechuanaland's Administrator.

Source 6

Pie chart showing division of land south of Molopo:

79% Crown land

13% Mercenaries

8% Batswana

What does the name "Lord of Lies" tell us about the Batswana's attitude to Shippard? Is this borne out by Source 6?

The expansion of the Bechuanaland Protectorate

Meanwhile, the British government decided to end any possibility of a link-up between German Namibia and the SAR by extending the Bechuanaland Protectorate north of the Molopo to include the southern half of Botswana. In March 1885, Warren was instructed to communicate this development to Sechele and Khama. He set out to do this the following month, crossing the Molopo with only 70 men. The timing was appropriate, as a small German expedition passed through Botswana only a few months later.

Leading Bakwena had already read about the imposition of the Protectorate in the Kimberley newspapers when Warren formally notified the Molepolole *kgotla* on 27 April 1885. There he was immediately challenged by Sechele's son Sebele who asked:

Source 7

What in us has brought this on that our country should be taken from us?

Warren tried to insist that he had come to establish a Protectorate, not take land, but he was unconvincing. For his part, Sechele stated:

Source 8

I do not know the exact object of your coming here. When we see you appear here we do not know if it will be life or death to us, but that we know it will be death to us if you do to us as the Boers do to the Bahurutshe. We shall be dead men if you do to us as the Boers did to the Bakgatla at Rustenburg. If you talk merely in parables we shall not understand you easily. I have seen a newspaper in which it is said I asked for protection, also Gaseitsiwe and Khama. I do not understand this asking. The Bakwena were collected together as they are now when I went to the Cape to get guns and powder to defend myself with. I went with Sanwe, Mr. Sam Edwards, here. There are others who can testify if I ever asked for anything beside to be allowed to buy guns and powder; to be allowed to obtain weapons the same as what the Boers had, to defend myself against them. As to our friendship I do not know why, because of that our country should be taken possession of. Why is known only to you white people and the missionary who lives here.

Source 9

Warren at Molepolole kgotla

After two days of discussions Warren left Molepolole having failed to win Sechele's submission. Interestingly, the Mokwena had no illusions about resisting the British. As early as 1868 when asked if he would fight them, Sechele stated: "How could I? The great English would eat me up in one day."

Warren proceeded to Shoshong where Khama enthusiastically welcomed his announcement of the Protectorate, though most of the Bangwato were opposed to the British presence. On 13 May 1885 he signed a document, drafted by Mackenzie, in which it was stated:

Source 10

Further I give to the Queen to make laws and change them in the country of the Bamangwato, with reference to both black and white.

1. Why do you think Sebele and Sechele were so suspicious of Warren's words? See Source 8.

2. In your opinion, why did Khama accept Warren's words willingly?

3. Do you think Gaseitsiwe was pressured to submit because others had already done so? Elaborate on your answer.

Mackenzie also convinced Khama to hand over about one quarter of Botswana's land, much of it not under his actual control, for the English settlers. Warren then returned to Molepolole where Sechele was pressured to reach a similar agreement. But the Mokwena was only willing to give up his own claims to Bakgatla-occupied lands east of the Notwane and parts of the western Kgalagadi bordering on Namibia "as long as my people should be able to hunt there". He further conceded: "Concerning the laws which shall be established in the country, I wish to rule among my people according to custom, but I give to the Queen to rule among white people wherever they are." Later, when also pressed for an agreement, Gaseitsiwe made a similar gesture, giving up his residual claims to Gamalete and Hukuntsi.

British plans for the area

Though they knew that Gaseitsiwe and Sechele's land concessions were worthless, Warren and Mackenzie hoped to use Khama's "magnificent offer" as the basis for creating a white settler colony.

Was Khama's offer really "magnificent"? Whose point of view would this have been? How would his people have felt?

They submitted a plan to carve out 7 000 farms of about 6 000 acres each. Fortunately, this idea was overruled from above. The British government accepted South African High Commissioner Hercules Robinson's conclusion that:

Source 11

As to the country north of the Molopo River . . . it appears to me that we have no interest in it, except as a road to the interior. I would suggest, therefore, that we should confine ourselves to preventing that part of the Protectorate being occupied by either Filibusters [mercenaries] or Foreign powers, doing, for present, as little as possible in the way of administration or settlement. The Chiefs, Gatziziba [Gaseitsiwe], Sechele and Khama, might be left to govern their own tribes in their own fashion and their offer of lands to Her Majesty's Government . . . should be refused.

It was therefore decided that the British presence north of the Molopo would be limited to occasional police patrols to "protect Sechele's country and the country neighbouring to Shoshong". This circumstance suited the Batswana who were reported to have an "utter distaste for the rules of control of the white man".

On 30 September 1885, the Batswana were administratively divided by the Molopo River. The *merafe* south of the river, who now lived in the shadow of white settlers, became part of the colony of British Bechuanaland, which was later incorporated into South Africa as the Northern Cape. The Bechuanaland Protectorate survived north of the Molopo to become Botswana.

1. What do you understand by "protection" of Sechele's country and the country neighbouring Shoshong?

2. Explain in your own words the phrase "utter distaste for the rules of control of the white man".

3. Why do you think Batswana felt that the rule of the white man was distasteful?

Summary

In 1885 much of Botswana was occupied by the British to keep it from falling under the control of the Germans. This action was part of a wider late nineteenth century scramble for Africa that brought most of the continent under European control. In accepting the imposition of the Protectorate, local *dikgosi* were aware of how the British had militarily crushed the Batlhaping to their south. At first both the British and the *dikgosi* were able to agree that the latter should be left to govern their own people.

What have I learnt?

1. a) What is imperialism?
   b) What were the two types of nineteenth century British imperialists?
2. a) Name four factors that contributed to the scramble for Africa.
   b) When did the scramble occur?
3. a) How did the British acquire Griqualand West?
   b) What other groups claimed the area?
4. a) Why did Batswana try to form a confederation during the 1870s?
   b) How did Josef Ludorf contribute to Batswana unity? See Source 3.
5. a) Why did the Batlhaping fight the British in 1878?
   b) What was Charles Warren's role in the war?
6. a) What is meant by the word "mercenary"?
   b) Who were the Stellalanders?
7. a) What is the significance of the Warren Expedition?
   b) Why was it sent to Botswana?
8. Compare and contrast the responses of Khama and Sechele to the Protectorate. Use a table and then write a paragraph.

Chapter Twelve

The consolidation of British rule

Although the British declared their Protectorate in 1885, they did not begin to exercise full colonial control over Botswana until 1890. As we saw in the last chapter, the British Colonial Office initially believed that their interests north of the Molopo were limited. They therefore did not want to spend money establishing a colonial administration.

Introduction

Before 1890, the British interfered little in the rule of the *dikgosi*. Thereafter they gradually began to introduce a system of indirect rule. Under indirect rule, colonial officials ruled through *dikgosi*, who were no longer free to run their own people's affairs without interference. Instead they were expected to obey instructions from above. Indirect rule was based on the imperialists' belief that they alone had the ability to hold ultimate authority.

Why did the British suddenly decide to impose indirect rule?

The reason was that their view of Botswana began to change. In 1885, their primary concern had been limited to preventing the Germans in Namibia from linking up with the Boers of the South African Republic. But by 1890, Botswana had become a base from which British imperialism could expand northward into central Africa.

Rhodes and the British South Africa Company

The leading imperialist pushing for the expansion of colonial rule into Botswana and central Africa was Cecil Rhodes. He had become one of the richest men in the world through his ownership of South African diamond and gold mines. Rhodes also hoped to control the wealth of central Africa. His friend *Morena Maaka* Shippard, the official immediately responsible for the Bechuanaland Protectorate, supported him in this.

Can you remember why and by whom Shippard was called **Morena Maaka?**

First Shippard helped Rhodes gain a foothold in Zimbabwe. In 1888 he visited *Inkosi* Lobengula of the Amandebele taking along J.S. Moffat, son of the famous LMS missionary Robert Moffat. The two misled Lobengula. They told the king that if he would sign a concession with Rhodes, the British would help him keep white fortune seekers out of his country. Lobengula then signed a friendship treaty with Britain. Shippard and Moffat were soon followed by Rhodes's agent, C.D. Rudd, who got Lobengula to sign a concession for mineral rights to his country. As fortune seekers poured in, Lobengula realised he had been tricked. He tried to dissolve the Rudd Concession, but Rhodes told him he was prepared to uphold his claim by force if necessary. The British were nowhere to be seen. Lobengula realised he was doomed, and had this to say:

Source 1

Did you ever see a chameleon catch a fly? The chameleon gets behind the fly and remains motionless . . . Then he advances very slowly and gently. At last, he darts his tongue and the fly disappears. Rhodes is the chameleon and I am that fly.

How do you think Lobengula felt about Rhodes? Use Source 1 to support your answer in a well-structured paragraph.

How to write a paragraph:

1. First, plan your paragraph. Use a diagram or make notes of all the facts, quotes and ideas you can think of or read about. (If you have planned an essay, you will develop your diagram into several paragraphs.)
2. What is the main idea of your paragraph? Write it down in a single sentence. This sentence should answer the question and show your point of view.
3. Then order your facts and quotes in such a way that they support this first sentence. They can support the sentence in various ways: by giving examples, by showing a contrast, by giving extra information.
4. Connect the thought or meaning of each sentence to the previous one. Sometimes you can do this with linking words. "For example" can link an example to your main sentence. "However" shows a contradiction. "In addition" shows extra information. You could also use a synonym or repeated name. Vary the links so that your writing does not get monotonous.
5. Read through your paragraph or get a friend to read through it.
6. Write the paragraph out neatly.

Rhodes used the Rudd Concession as a basis for asking the British government to give his British South Africa Company (BSAC) permission to take control of central Africa. They agreed. In October 1889, Queen Victoria issued a royal charter, which gave the BSAC the authority to rule Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe on Britain's behalf. From this point, the BSAC became known as the Chartered Company. Rhodes wanted to take over Lobengula's and the Vashona's territory first, which he believed was rich in gold, before he assumed the cost of running Botswana. He therefore convinced the Colonial Office to temporarily maintain its responsibility over Bechuanaland Protectorate. In so doing he knew he could

Devise a role-play showing the negotiations between Rhodes and Lobengula. How does Lobengula react when he finds out that he has been tricked?

count on Shippard's administration to assist him in his conquest of the land he planned to call Rhodesia. Shippard later became a Director of the BSAC. Rhodes gave many of his subordinates, particularly officers in the Protectorate police, BSAC shares so that they would serve his interests.

The Kopong Conference

With Rhodes concentrating on Rhodesia, Shippard dealt with the Protectorate. First, he tried to calm the *dikgosi* of southern Botswana whom he had disturbed with loose talk of establishing colonial rule. Shippard accepted Sebele I's proposal that he convene a meeting of the *dikgosi*. In February 1889 the southern *dikgosi* and thousands of their followers gathered to meet Shippard at Kopong .

Shippard believed that he could trick the *dikgosi* at the Kopong Conference by getting them to say that they accepted colonial rule. Instead, Bathoen I, Linchwe I and Sebele (acting for his ailing father, Sechele) joined together to oppose the continued British presence in their territories. They told Shippard that they would rather be independent than ruled by imperialists. Linchwe said:

Source 2

"I do not wish either the Boers or the English to come and take our chieftainship away from us. All Bechuanas [Batswana] should fight together. God will protect us if the Protectorate is withdrawn and God is the greatest Protector."

Khama, however, kept his distance from these *dikgosi* and promised "to help the English government in every way". Disappointed by Bathoen, Linchwe and Sebele's defiant attitude, Shippard broke up the conference. In his report he noted:

Source 3

Khama who is thoroughly loyal and sincerely attached to the English appears to be more completely isolated. He is left out of all the private meetings of the Protectorate Chiefs and seems to be regarded by them with suspicion and dislike as the white man's friend.

A month later, Khama claimed at Kopong Sebele had tried to get him to join a plot to attack the British. The police report added:

Source 4

Khama says Chiefs below (i.e. those in the south, Bathoen, Linchwe and Sebele) blame Khama for inviting the white man in and backing them (the British) to the point of fighting them (the southern dikgosi).

Khama's support for Shippard prevented the **dikgosi** from speaking with a united voice against the establishment of colonial rule.

Imposing colonial rule was not just done by force. The British used the law to control Batswana and to disguise their real purpose: to use the Protectorate for Britain's gain. These laws also show how the British were influenced by racism in their dealings with Batswana.

The Orders-in Council of 1890-91

WORDS

An **Order-in-Council** is an order or decree given in the name of the British monarch.

The new kind of colonial rule was imposed through the Orders-in-Council of 1890 and 1891.

The first Order-in-Council in June 1890 made an official called the High Commissioner the Queen's representative in southern Africa. This official was to:

Source 5

Provide for giving effect to any power or jurisdiction which Her Majesty (Queen Victoria), her heirs or successors, may at any time before or after the date of this order have within the limits of this order.

This meant that the High Commissioner was acting for the Queen and had absolute power over the Bechuanaland Protectorate. He could even cancel laws that had been made in the past. These new powers were necessary because Shippard had to find a way to cancel concessions held by companies other than the BSAC. Bathoen, Linchwe, Moremi and Sebele had each sold concessions in their territories and this contradicted the rights given to the BSAC by the royal charter. Most of these rival concessions recognised the *dikgosi*, not Queen Victoria, as the sovereigns of the soil (that is, owners and rulers of the land).

Shippard had tried to declare all non-BSAC concessions invalid earlier in 1889. He backed down when it was recognised that he had no authority to issue such an order. The British gave themselves absolute power in the Protectorate by issuing the Orders-in-Council. These orders extended the Protectorate's border to include all of the present northern Botswana. The peoples of Ngamiland and Chobe were thus brought into the Protectorate for the first time.

Refusing to acknowledge these orders, the *dikgosi* still claimed to be sovereigns of the soil. In June, the same month that the 1890 Order was issued, the High Commissioner's own legal

advisor, W.P. Schreiner, upheld the *dikgosi's* position. He thought that Gaseitsiwe, Khama and Sechele's proposals when accepting the Protectorate in 1885:

Source 6

"do not per se convey the Crown (Queen Victoria) any legal jurisdiction within the territories of those Chiefs" so that "the delegation to the British South Africa Company of a legal jurisdiction founded upon the due acceptance of the proposals referred to, would be an act requiring for its validity the approval or assent of the Chiefs concerned".

In other words, nothing in the agreements made by the *dikgosi* handed over the *dikgosi's* sovereignty to Queen Victoria. After the Kopong Conference, Shippard realised that the *dikgosi* would never voluntarily submit to colonial overrule. Nor would they be willing to submit to the BSAC. Indeed, in 1890, Bathoen, Linchwe and Sebele worked together to block such British acts as the construction of a telegraph, the sinking of wells and the stationing of police in their territories. When their protests failed, they employed lawyers to challenge Britain in court. Their claim to be sovereigns of the soil thus posed a serious legal challenge to making the BSAC the rulers of the Protectorate.

The Bramestone memorandum

To overcome the *dikgosi's* objections, in February 1891 a senior Colonial Office official in Britain named John Bramestone drafted a document. It was called "Memorandum as to the Jurisdiction and Administrative Powers of a European State Holding Protectorates in Africa". This document provided the basis not only for colonial rule in Botswana. Other African protectorates such as Uganda and Malawi were also affected. In his memo, Bramestone defined Botswana as:

Source 7

An uncivilized territory to which Europeans resort in greater or less numbers and where, in as much as the native rulers of the territory are incapable of maintaining peace, order and good government among Europeans, the protecting power maintains courts, police and other institutions for the control, safety and benefit of its own subjects and of the natives.

He then argued that sovereignty in an "uncivilized" African territory could be exercised by the same methods as if the ruler had ceded his whole country to her Majesty. He based his conclusion on the Foreign Jurisdictions Act under which Botswana had originally been occupied. The act had been changed to allow the British government to control its own subjects in the "uncivilized" foreign territories. Bramestone then concluded that if Britain was allowed to protect its citizens in Protectorates, then it had the right as a civilised power to place its own courts and government officers in an uncivilised territory.

The Bramestone memorandum is an example of the racist nature of imperialism in Africa. Batswana were labelled uncivilised and thus "incapable of maintaining peace, order and good government" simply because they were black Africans. Britain's right to rule Botswana was thus justified. It was not meant to protect Batswana from the Boers or any other whites - it was to protect all whites from Batswana.

On the basis of the Bramestone memorandum, a second Order-in-Council was issued in May 1891. It authorised the High Commissioner to enact laws, to establish a court system, to raise taxes and to take additional steps to maintain peace, order and good government of all persons within Botswana. To ensure that the Batswana accepted the new colonial order, Shippard expanded his police force. One large force was stationed at Gaborone to watch over the southern *dikgosi*.

Source 8

Officer of the Bechuanaland Border Police

Source 9

Gaborone camp in the 1890s

Look at Sources 8 and 9.

1. Who are the people in these pictures?

2. Why were they in Botswana?

3. Do you think they should have been in Botswana? Give reasons for your answer.

Khama and the founding of Rhodesia (Zimbabwe)

Only one *kgosi* had been formally notified of the BSAC's royal charter. On 16 December 1889, Shippard wrote to Khama:

Source 10

The British South Africa Company has received from Her Majesty most extensive powers not only over the whole Bechuanaland Protectorate, but up to the Chobe and Zambezi Rivers and far beyond... The powers of the Company include all mercantile operations, digging for precious stones and minerals, the raising, equipping and maintenance of armed forces for preserving order and protecting the territories included in the company's charter and many other rights and privileges. The company will not interfere in any way with your rights and powers in the Government of your country and people and Mr. Rhodes hopes to have your support and assistance in his great work of carrying the blessings of civilization not only into Matebeleland and Mashonaland [Zimbabwe], but, in due time and with God's blessing, throughout the interior of Africa.

In his reply to Shippard, Khama stated that:

Source 11

I trust I may always be found ready to give all the help in my power to open the interior to the blessings of God's Book and all the blessings which the English people have brought to me and my people and to help the English Government in every way in which I gave my promise to you at Kopong to be ready to do.

Khama's letter to the BSAC went further by specifically offering Rhodes soldiers if he started a war against the Amandebele.

Khama had already assisted Rhodes by detaining a number of Bulawayo-bound individuals who opposed BSAC interests. This led to an international incident in July 1888 when his men attacked party of Boers. Piet Grobler, the SAR's ambassador to

the Amandebele, was killed in the ensuing gunfight. Khama had also urged the Balozi in Zambia to follow his example by signing agreements with Rhodes' agents. These agreements led to the creation of BSAC-ruled Northern Rhodesia (Zambia).

From 1890, Khama's capital at Palapye served as the BSAC's forward base for conquering central Africa. The Bangwato assisted in the 1890 invasion of Zimbabwe by the company's pioneer column. In the years that followed, Khama prospered by providing support for BSAC operations.

Khama was helpful to Rhodes in 1893. He supplied 1 760 troops (more than the 1 000 requested of him) to join 815 Protectorate police and 1 230 BSAC soldiers in a war against the Amandebele. The conflict had been provoked by BSAC in order to seize more Amandebele territory. In an effort to avoid a fight he knew he would lose, Lobengula sent two groups of messengers to beg for peace from the High Commissioner. This appeal never reached its destination as members of both groups were killed by the Protectorate police. After months of heavy fighting, the Amandebele kingdom was destroyed. A new settler colony was established, known as Southern Rhodesia.

Botswana was colonised differently to the Rhodesias, now called Zimbabwe and Zambia.

Botswana initially came under British rule through a protectorate, but gradually Britain interfered in the affairs of Botswana and imposed indirect rule, ruling through the chiefs. Zimbabwe, on the other hand, was colonised by conquest. Rhodes' BSAC took the country by force of arms. The company proceeded to take large chunks of land and demand tax and labour. The colonisation of Zimbabwe was more brutal and more exploitative than that of Botswana.

Sebele resists colonial rule

By March 1892, southern Botswana was on the brink of war. The Protectorate police were being reinforced at Gaborone in preparation for a possible assault on Molepolole. The region had been drifting towards a crisis since the 1891 Order-in-Council. In October 1891, the British used their new authority to impose licence fees on the Protectorate's traders. When the southern *dikgosi* questioned this decree, they were told that they had no say in the matter. Despite this, Sebele forbade Asian and Boer merchants operating in Kweneng to pay the fees.

In February 1892, Shippard's new Assistant Commissioner for the Southern Protectorate, William Surmon, tried to force the Kweneng traders to pay their fees. Surmon's post had also been created in October 1891 "with the view of keeping in check the somewhat turbulent Chiefs Linchwe and Sebele". When his police tried to close an Asian shop for a non-payment, Sebele had it reopened. Then the two policemen tried to collect payment from a Boer trader, but were stopped by a Bakwena mob. Sebele informed the two that "he refused to allow anyone trading on his ground to pay any licence whatever; he was the man to whom licenses had to be paid, not the English government." Shippard then called for tough action:

Source 12

I am of the opinion that the matter is too serious to be safely treated as a mere case of obstructing the police in the performance of their duties . . . It appears to me beyond doubt that this case is regarded by the other Chiefs and the natives generally in the Southern Protectorate, as a test and that any further attempt to collect licenses or exact payment of fine, will be resisted. I should deprecate any threats or demands which we might not be prepared immediately to enforce . . . Towards this end I think the first step should be to come to an understanding with Khama and obtain from him his promise of assistance in the event of trouble arising in the Southern Protectorate. In any case and whether annexation be decided on or not, it appears to me to be necessary to make immediate preparations for coercive measures.

Soon the High Commissioner authorised preparations for a joint assault on Molepolole by the police and Bangwato. A detailed plan had already been drafted for the joint conquest of southern Botswana by British forces supported by Bangwato. Shippard was afraid, though, that the Bakgatla, Bangwaketse and Batlokwa would join the Bakwena if fighting broke out. The Bakwena, themselves, decided only to fight if first fired on. Sebele therefore decided to back down by donating 10 cattle to Surmon as a sign of his friendship. He added:

Imagine that you are Sebele. You have received a copy of this letter written by Shippard (see Source 12). Write a well-structured paragraph describing your reaction.

Source 13

Many ancestors kept their villages in good order without acting under the compulsion of others. Friendship does not mean giving laws to another. Friendship is to advise each other.

To Shippard's frustration, his superiors in London welcomed this development. They told the High Commissioner that he could impose fees only "with the consent of the Chiefs".

The Concessions Commission and the Bakaa crisis

However, the peaceful resolution of the crisis over the imposition of trading licences did not solve the larger issue of BSAC rights within Botswana.

In August 1892, a British MP with interests in Sebele's Secheleland concession wrote to the Colonial Office protesting continued efforts to have non-BSAC concessions cancelled. In reply, he was informed that the government had decided to form a commission of enquiry to look into the whole question of concessions.

The 1893 Concessions Commission was not an impartial body. Its task was to disallow those concessions that clashed with BSAC interests. Sebele still insisted that he, not Queen Victoria, had the authority to decide such matters and refused to deal with the commission. Lawyers for the rival concessions also maintained that the BSAC had acquired no rights in Botswana.

By the time the commission issued its report, its legitimacy was challenged. Recognising this, the British then delayed. They wanted to give the BSAC time to make private agreements with the *dikgosi* and rival concessionaires.

In February 1894, Shippard tried once more to provoke a war against the southern *dikgosi*. Earlier, the Bakaa, who had been living with the Bakwena since 1849, had broken up into two factions following the death of their *kgosi*, Mosinyi. This split led to disputes over cattle. With the assistance of Bathoen and other neighbouring *dikgosi*, Sebele awarded the royal cattle to one of the claimants, Segotso. But Shippard, who backed the rival claims of Khama's son-in-law, Tshwene, rejected this. Shippard recommended that Khama be allowed to impose a settlement. Surmon was then appointed to hold an enquiry with the assistance of Khama's secretary, Ratshosa.

Why do you think Shippard supported Tshwene's claims?

Surmon's proceedings shocked the Bakgatla, Bangwaketse and Bakwena who came to witness the proceedings. Surmon ignored the Batswana and simply gave all the cattle to Tshwene, without specifying how many he was owed. When 196 were delivered, Surmon called for another 200. Sebele then decided to oppose the judgement.

Shippard tried to use Sebele's supposed refusal to obey Surmon as a basis for his deposition. New plans were made to burn down Molepolole. In addition to Bangwato soldiers, Shippard tried to get Balete support by promising them Bangwaketse territory. He planned to finance the operation by the seizure and sale of Bakwena cattle. Even though Sebele

agreed to send the 200 extra cattle to Surmon, Shippard continued with his evil scheme. Fortunately, the High Commissioner intervened and ordered the police to stand down.

Khama becomes suspicious of Rhodes

It is unclear whether or not Khama was really eager to join Shippard in warring on his fellow Batswana by 1894. At the time, he was beginning to understand that Rhodes was a threat to his own position. With Zimbabwe now secure, the final transfer of Botswana to the BSAC seemed imminent. The loss by the Amandebele of most of their land to white Rhodesian settlers after the 1893 war might have been a warning to him. Rhodes himself showed no gratitude to Khama for the Bangwato support he had received. Meanwhile, his junior brothers, Raditladi and Mphoeng, who were rumoured to have Chartered Company support, were challenging Khama's position as *kgosi*. So Khama became suspicious of Rhodes. Khama and the southern *dikgosi* soon began to co-operate in opposing Rhodes and his BSAC.

By 1895, Rhodes was at the height of his power, being the Prime Minister of the Cape Colony as well as master of the Rhodesias. Direct control of Botswana now became a necessary stepping stone in the realisation of his greater ambition, control of all of southern Africa, by seizing the goldfields of the Boer-ruled SAR.

Bathoen, Khama and Sebele go to Britain

In July 1895, the Bakgatla, Barolong, Bakwena, Bangwaketse and Bangwato all sent petitions to London protesting the handover of the Protectorate to the BSAC. Bathoen, Khama and Sebele then decided to take their *merafe*'s cases directly to the British government and people. Between September and November 1895, the three travelled throughout Britain, speaking out against the BSAC in 40 different town and cities.

Source 14

Bathoen, Sebele and Khama with their adviser, W.C. Willoughby, and his assistant E. Lloyd

Their whirlwind tour of Britain was a public relations triumph. They worked closely with the London Missionary Society, which was celebrating its 100th birthday. The *dikgosi* presented themselves to the British public as good Christians. This was important because missionaries influenced many voters in Britain. Many citizens then pressured the politicians not to allow the Batswana to be governed by Rhodes.

The three *dikgosi* won support by accusing Rhodes of sinful commerce: "We fear that they will fill our country with liquor shops, as they have Bulawayo and some parts of Mashonaland and Matebele-land." This appeal worked. Bathoen and Sebele became teetotal like Khama to present a united front.

The *dikgosi*'s campaign also attracted support from many imperialists. Some believed that the Colonial Office should run Botswana, not the BSAC. Others who hated imperialism saw Rhodes as an evil man who needed to be

Source 15

Dikgosi *exchange gifts with Queen Victoria, whom they called Mmamosadinyana. This sketch was published in London in 1895*

stopped. So these people also sympathised with the *dikgosi*'s fears:

Source 16

You can really see now that what they [the BSAC] really want is not to govern nicely, but to take our land and sell it that they might see gain . . . the Company have conquered the Matebele and taken the land of the people they conquered. We know the custom: but we have not yet heard that it is the custom of any people to take the best lands of their friends . . . Where will our cattle stay if the waters are taken from us? They will die. The Company wants to impoverish us so that hunger may drive us to become the white man's servants who dig mines and gather his wealth.

By November 1895, the three *dikgosi* had managed to get the Colonial Office to agree to a compromise. Gangwaketse, Gammangwato and the Kweneng were to remain under British control. The rest of the Protectorate, however, was to be handed over to the BSAC. The *dikgosi* then returned home, believing that at least they had secured their respective territories from Rhodes. A half a loaf seemed better than none.

Why was this arrangement described as a "half a loaf"?

The *dikgosi* are betrayed

Rhodes was soon reassured that the BSAC could get Botswana once the *dikgosi* went home and the British people forgot about them. The Colonial Office quickly transferred the Balete, Bakgatla and Barolong to Rhodes "as instalments of a general settlement with the British South African Company with regard to the Bechuanaland Protectorate". They also planned to reduce the size of Bathoen and Sebele's territories to next to nothing.

The job of shrinking Gangwaketse and the Kweneng was left to Hamilton Goold Adams, who had fought for Rhodes against the Amandebele. He was told to tighten the Bakwena

and Bangwaketse boundaries down to tiny, uneconomic reserves. Goold Adams was to make sure that permanent villages and farm plots were allocated only to "proper" Bakwena and Bangwaketse. Most cattleposts, pasturing, and hunting grounds were earmarked as "crown lands". High-sounding phrases disguised the theft. "The lawfulness of the relations of the Bechuana tribes proper towards the Bakalahari" was given as the reason for the new boundaries. Before Goold Adams could act, however, Rhodes made his first, big mistake.

Rhodes plans to invade the SAR

By 1895, the Colonial Secretary, Joseph Chamberlain, had privately given Rhodes the go-ahead to invade the SAR, though the British government was not officially involved. The British government decided that gold mining profits were making the SAR too independent. Lots of British mining people there were clamouring for cheaper transport, black labour and mining goods, but the SAR turned a deaf ear to their pleas. Britain feared too that Germany was gaining too much influence in the SAR and might take control of the gold fields. Rhodes's plan to invade the SAR seemed like a quick, cheap solution to Britain's problems or at least so Chamberlain thought.

As with the occupation of Zimbabwe, Botswana was to be the forward base for the invasion of the SAR by BSAC mercenaries. The eastern border was the staging ground. In preparation, the area between Ramatlabama and Gaborone was handed over to the BSAC in 1895.

On 23 December 1895, a month after they had left Britain, Bathoen, Khama and Sebele returned home. At the border, a crowd of several thousands gave them a hero's welcome. The *dikgosi*'s mission to Queen Victoria was praised as a diplomatic triumph, which would stop Rhodes taking over the county. But, with a growing number of British troops stationed between Mafikeng and Gaborone, it was not clear that they had really succeeded.

On their way to Molepolole, Khama and Sebele saw the armed force being assembled by Rhodes' top mercenary,

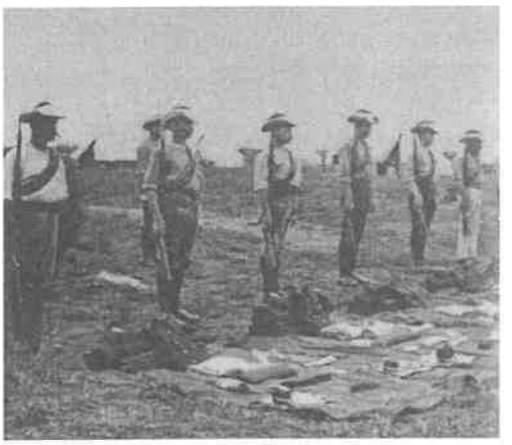
Dr L. S. Jameson. According to newspaper reports, its target was Mochudi, where Linchwe was supposed to be resisting the loss of some of his land. These reports were deliberate lies designed to trick the Boers. When Jameson's Bechuanaland Police set off from Pitsaneapotlhokwe on 29 December 1895, their true destination was Johannesburg.

Source 17

Dr L.S. Jameson

Source 18

The Jameson Raiders just before they set off



The Jameson Raid

Jameson's raid was part of a broader plot to overthrow Kruger's SAR. Jameson was to invade from Botswana, while British expatriates in Johannesburg were supposed to lead an uprising there.

Despite much secrecy, the plan became widely known by SAR President Kruger's secret police. The expatriate rebellion failed after most of its leaders were arrested. Meanwhile, Jameson's men were surrounded near Krugersdorp, where they surrendered on 2 January 1896.

The failure of the Jameson Raid resulted in a huge international scandal. Rhodes' political influence in Britain and in Botswana ended because he was disgraced. Rule by the Colonial Office was restored and Goold Adams's boundaries were forgotten.

Due to good luck, Bathoen, Khama and Sebele were able to defeat Rhodes after all. After the fall of Rhodes, the Batswana now saw the *dikgosi*'s mission to the Britain as a heroic success. Over the years, a story grew that Queen Victoria had listened to the *dikgosi* and stopped Rhodes from taking the Protectorate. Of course, if Rhodes had taken the SAR, the Batswana would have lived under his government.

Rhodes still kept his economic interests in Botswana after 1896. His company owned the railways and the Gaborone, Ghanzi, Lobatse and Tuli Block, and also continued to own mineral rights over most of Botswana.

A documentary drama series simply called *Rhodes* was filmed in South Africa in 1995 and shown on television for the first time in Britain in 1996. The producer, Scott Meek, had this to say:

It's just such a powerful story and it needs to be told because these days not many people know about Rhodes any more. But the history of the British Empire, of South Africa and possibly the whole world would have been different if Rhodes had not existed.

In an essay, state whether you agree with this statement, specifically referring to the history of Botswana.

What have I learnt?

1. What is meant by indirect rule?
2. What is the significance to Botswana and Zimbabwe of the 1889 Royal Charter to the British South Africa Company?
3. Why did the British government want to give Botswana to Rhodes after 1890?
4. a) Why was the 1889 Kopong conference held?
   b) What was its outcome?
5. a) How did the Orders-in-Council of 1890 and 1891 affect Botswana?

b) Why were they issued?

6. a) What was the Concessions Commission?
   b) Which *dikgosi* refused to recognise its jurisdiction?
7. a) Why did Bathoen, Khama and Sebele go to London?
   b) Did they succeed in getting what they wanted?
8. Describe two ways in which the *dikgosi* opposed British officials between 1892 and 1894.
9. Arrange the following events in chronological order using a time line:
   - the Jameson Raid
   - the British approve building a railway through Botswana
   - the BSAC is granted its charter by the British queen
   - Bathoen, Khama and Sebele go to Britain
   - the Concessions Commission meets.

Chapter Thirteen

The new Tswana culture

Throughout this book, we have seen how life in Botswana changed after the Difaqane. Europeans, whether Boers, missionaries, traders or government officials, have appeared regularly. All these people had some influence on the way in which Batswana lived. Of all these newcomers, the missionaries perhaps had the greatest influence on the lives of Batswana.

Mission expansion 1816-1885

Missionaries came to work among the Batswana very early in the nineteenth century. Various churches started among the Batswana who lived in the areas to the south. During the course of the nineteenth century, the missions moved north and eventually were found in most parts of Botswana.

The first mission group to work among the Batswana was the London Missionary Society (LMS), a Protestant group from England. In 1816 they established their headquarters among the Batlhaping at Kudumane and used this place as a base from which to expand their operations.

It was not long before other missionary groups arrived. In the 1820s, another Protestant organisation called the Wesleyan Missionary Society began to send people to work among the Barolong and Bahurutshe. During the 1830s, a French Protestant group known as the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society set up a number of stations among the Bahurutshe. There were also some failed attempts by American Baptists and English Anglicans to move into the same areas.

Before long, the LMS became the main missionary organisation in the Cape among the Barolong and Batlhaping. Despite being unsuccessful in converting Batswana to Christianity early on, the LMS was able to gain many converts after the Difaqane.

In most of Africa, missionaries did not have much success in converting ordinary citizens to Christianity. Usually they started off by converting the outcasts of society, such as cripples, albinos, orphans, widows, refugees and people from a slave background. This was because *dikgosi*, elders and free citizens had their own cultures, which they liked and did not want to give up. So when the LMS first came among the Batlhaping and Barolong, it is not surprising that they converted only a few widows.

The success of the LMS

All this changed around 1830. After the devastation caused by the Difaqane, there were large numbers of Batswana who became refugees. Many of these people ended up moving to Kudumane, where the missionaries offered them land and the chance to lead a peaceful life. Kudumane was then being run by the Rev. Robert Moffat, who was a missionary of great charisma. Moffat, like the other early LMS missionaries, had arrived and failed to make any impression on the Batswana. But after six hard years, he learned Setswana and eventually became a master of the language. He began to relate the Bible to the Batswana in a manner that they appreciated and also translated many English hymns into Setswana. Because of Moffat's abilities, the LMS gained many converts in the northern Cape area during the 1830s.

1. Imagine that you are a missionary working among people who speak a different language to your own. Write a short paragraph on what you would do to make these people understand and believe you.

2. Take any two verses from the Bible and translate them into your language.

Due to the LMS's success, the other missionary societies left the area. The Wesleyans ended up concentrating on the Amaxhosa and the Batswana of the Orange Free State, while the French focused their efforts in Lesotho.

During the 1840s, the LMS began to expand to the north. A young minister called David Livingstone was sent to preach in Botswana and he settled among the Bakwena in 1845.

David Livingstone played a great role in the lives of the Batswana people. Look back at Chapter 7.

Draw a map showing Livingstone's journey from Kudumane to Central Africa. Make notes on his activities and their effects in the various "stations" where he stayed.

The LMS and the Boers

Just as the LMS was expanding, it ran into trouble with the Boers of the SAR. This is because Livingstone and other missionaries were helping to defend the Batswana from Boer attacks, by supplying them with guns and promoting ties with traders.

Refer to Chapter 7 for more details on Livingstone's role in these clashes.

After the battle of Dimawe, the Boers expelled the LMS. They also put pressure on Livingstone to leave the Bakwena, which he did. Livingstone's support for Batswana armies gave the LMS great popularity thereafter.

When the LMS left the Kweneng and the SAR, the Boers wanted to replace it with a church that would support Boer rule. For this reason, the SAR government approached a German Lutheran group, based in the colony of Natal, called the Hermannsburg Missionary Society. In 1857 the Hermannsburgers moved into Kweneng and then also started a church among the Bangwato.

It was only in the mid-1860s when the LMS moved back into Botswana that Hermannsburg missionaries agreed to concentrate on the SAR. Over the next two decades, LMS missionaries were sent among the Bakwena, Bangwato, Bangwaketse and Batawana. By the year 1900, the LMS, called *Lontone* by the Batswana, was the main church in Botswana and had the support of most of the Batswana *dikgosi*.

Conversion of the Batswana elite

Who were the people that the missionaries first interacted with and converted to their way of thinking?

In the 1830s, Robert Moffat and the LMS at Kudumane gained many converts from the Difaqane refugees. In Botswana, the situation was different. Among the Batswana, in contrast to much of Africa, it was the *dikgosi*, the royal family members and the traditional doctors, who were the first converts.

Why was this the case?

It was partly because the LMS and the other missionaries concentrated much of their efforts on converting important people as a means of influencing other Batswana. David Livingstone, for instance, converted only a few people. His first and most important convert was *Kgosi* Sechele. Following his conversion, many of the other leading Bakwena became Christians.

Among the Bangwato, *Kgosi* Sekgoma opposed Christianity, but once the missionaries had converted his eldest son, Khama, it only became a matter of time before Christianity became important. Khama made Christianity the national religion of the Bangwato after 1875 and imposed various laws in accordance with the dictates of the Bible.

All the Batswana *dikgosi* had adopted Christianity by 1910 and most of them long before that. *Dikgosi* knew that missionaries brought many benefits with them if they were allowed to operate inside Batswana territory. For example:

- Missionaries knew a lot about the whites so they could explain and give advice to the *dikgosi* about how to deal with foreigners.

- Missionaries also encouraged trading and so brought valuable practical skills with them, whether in irrigation, construction, carpentry, blacksmithing or gun repair.
- Missionaries also knew how to read and write and were usually willing to teach the Batswana how to do the same.

So for these reasons, many *dikgosi* sent messages to the churches asking for a missionary if they did not have one.

Another important group of converts for the missionaries was the *dingaka*, who opposed Christianity in the other parts of Africa. Perhaps the reason why Batswana *dingaka* liked Christianity was because many of the missionaries who came to Botswana also had medical training and were able to cure diseases. Men like David Livingstone and the Wesleyan, Joseph Ludorf, cured hundreds of people on their journeys. It seems that many *dingaka* felt that if they adopted Christianity, they would gain increased spiritual power. Thus they would have more power to fight witchcraft and disease.

The role of African missionaries

Another factor in the spread of Christianity was the fact that many of the Batswana who had been converted at Kudumane were then sent north to work. Because these missionaries spoke Setswana and knew Tswana culture very well, they were able to convert far more people than the European missionaries. For instance, the LMS sent very few European missionaries to the Bangwaketse, yet that *morafe* had the most Christians in Botswana by the 1890s. This was because African missionaries sent from Kudumane were very active.

Christian missionaries benefited from Robert Moffat's translation of the Bible into Setswana in 1857. Moffat's translation, which is still used today, brought the Bible to the Batswana in an appealing and poetic style. This was important because the Bible often did not make sense when translated into another language. As the Jews in the Bible's Old Testament lived in a manner similar to the Batswana, Moffat's translation brought their way of life and the message of Christianity very directly to them.

Source 1

An early Motswana evangelist

Before the 1890s, the LMS's priority was to keep one missionary in each town to spread the word of God. But after 1890, once they had many Batswana to help them, they became interested in making their presence felt more strongly. This they tried to do through education.

Missionary education

Missionaries emphasised education for several reasons:

- Firstly, they knew that if more people learned to read and write, then those people would read the Bible.
- They also hoped to preach religion to the people they taught and so build up a large group of churchgoers.

By 1900 they had established schools in all the main towns and even in a few smaller villages such as Lehututu. Conditions were very poor and classes were small with all pupils being taught in the same room. The emphasis was on learning reading, writing and arithmetic. Along with this basic education, the students were given Bible lessons.

Not many children attended school in the years before 1910. This was mainly because Batswana children, especially the boys, worked at the cattleposts all year round. Most of the pupils were the children of the richer people and the royal

families, who could afford to replace their children as potential workers. Of the poorer students, most were girls.

Batswana from the leading families were thus the first to become well-educated. Due to their training, they were able to obtain jobs working for the *dikgosi*, traders, churches and government. Many of these Batswana wanted to get more advanced education and travelled as far as Cape Town to attend secondary school. The LMS finally, in 1904, built a secondary school with an advanced curriculum for African children. The school was located near Vryburg in the Cape and was known as the Tiger Kloof Native Institute. This school educated hundreds of prominent Batswana, including our nation's first two presidents.

Other missions

By 1910, the LMS had churches all over the Bangwaketse, Bangwato, Bakwena and Batawana reserves, as well as in the Chobe and in the Matsheng area of the Kgalagadi. Two reserves had different churches. The Hermannsburg Lutherans began working among the Balete in 1858 and have continued to do so to the present day. When the Balete went to Ramotswa, the Hermannsburgers followed and established a school and later a hospital. Meanwhile, the Boer-dominated Dutch Reformed Church had first sent missionaries to live among the Bakgatla-ba-ga-Kgafela in 1864. These missionaries followed the Bakgatla-ba-ga-Kgafela into Botswana when they left the SAR in 1870 and still work among them today.

Missionaries and Tswana culture

What the missionaries wanted to achieve in Botswana was to change the way people thought and behaved.

The missionaries demanded that the Batswana prohibit certain parts of their culture. They said that certain parts of Tswana culture were pagan and thus outlawed by God. Christians had to renounce these practices or they would not be allowed into the Church.

The missionaries were only partly successful. Some parts of Tswana culture did change as Christianity spread, but not all. This was because the Batswana and the *dikgosi* chose what they liked about Christianity and mixed these features with their own culture. The Batswana did not just do what the missionaries told them to do.

The missionaries' influence on traditional religion

The main success of the missionaries was getting most Batswana to adopt Christian beliefs instead of their traditional beliefs. Batswana came to believe that *Modimo*, their old God, had a son, Jesus, who had lived among men. In addition to God and Jesus, there were also two other supernatural forces that the Batswana adopted. These were the Holy Spirit, which promoted God's plans and also Satan, who opposed them.

The missionaries' influence on birth and burial practices

One new practice the missionaries brought was baptism. It replaced the traditional ceremony where *dingaka* gave protection to newly born children. Instead, babies were now treated with holy water by Christian priests. Another example can be found in burials. Traditionally, the Batswana buried their dead in their cattle kraals or their houses. Under missionary influence, burials began to be done in graveyards, with the deceased only being buried after a service conducted according to Christian rites.

The missionaries' influence on *bogwera* and *bojale*

All missionaries attacked *bogwera* and *bojale* ceremonies and put pressure on the *dikgosi* to end the ceremonies. They also forbade Christians to send their children to initiation. The missionaries often did this, thinking that the Batswana were

worshipping spirits at these ceremonies, even though that was not true. Partly, the missionaries objected to the killing of one of the boys at *bogwera* and the use of *bongaka* at these ceremonies. But perhaps most importantly, the missionaries knew that *bogwera* taught all youths about traditional culture. They thought that Christianity would spread faster among people who had not been taught about traditional culture and so would adopt a new way of thinking.

However, rooting out initiation practises was not easy because the Batswana felt that only an initiated person could get married and act as an adult. Some Christian parents obeyed their missionaries and kept their children from *bogwera*, while others sent their children secretly.

Eventually, the missionaries succeeded in ending *bogwera* almost everywhere in Botswana. Khama banned it first, followed by Bathoen, Sebele and later Mathiba in Ngamiland.

However, after 1900, some missionaries came to feel that *bogwera* had a positive role to play in educating youngsters and, along with the *dikgosi*, tried to reinstate a modified version which did not include circumcision and *bongaka*. So it continued for a while among Bakgatla and Batawana. Of all the Batswana, the Batlokwa and Balete continued to practise traditional style *bogwera* openly until after independence.

The missionaries' influence on marriage

Another change that the missionaries insisted on was that each man should only have one wife. They did this even though there was no law in the Bible to outlaw polygamy. When Sechele became a Christian in 1847, he had to divorce four of his wives. Many other Batswana made the same choice.

The ban on polygamy was followed by other new ways for Christians to get married. Early missionaries felt that *bogadi* was sinful. They felt that to pay *bogadi* was similar to buying a slave. A marriage, they felt, should be a contract between two Christians of equal status who would then raise a family and live according to the laws of God. So they introduced wedding

ceremonies where a minister joined the couple in marriage in church. In doing so, they tried to replace the old system of marriage, when *bogadi* joined two families together in an alliance. However, not all the Batswana Christians opposed *bogadi* and so the custom has carried on to this day.

The missionaries' influence on the calendar

Missionaries also brought religious holidays, like Christmas and Easter, on which services were held and people were not supposed to work. Likewise, the churches brought with them the calendar and set their services on Sundays. Prior to this, the Batswana did not have a calendar based on months. Instead, they simply kept track of the seasons. After Christianity came, a new rhythm of life was adopted and the concept of the week was introduced, with all people treating Sunday as a day of rest and worship. In this way, Christianity became part of everyday life.

The missionaries' influence on *bongaka* and *boloi*

All the missionaries were very opposed to the practice of *bongaka* and *boloi*, which they saw as the work of Satan. So they tried to promote western medicine to replace *bongaka* and worked hard to get their own members to use western medicine. This effort had very little success, though. Before 1910, the missionaries did not have enough funds to build hospitals and most Batswana had to rely on traditional healing. In addition, most Batswana continued to believe in *bongaka* no matter what the missionaries said. For instance, *Kgosi* Sechele, one of Botswana's first Christians, kept using *bongaka* and *boloi* for the rest of his life. Even those Batswana who became Christians believed that *boloi* was being used all around them. Many *dingaka* continued to practise their trade after being converted. These Christian *dingaka* used the spiritual power of the new religion to improve their own curing ability.

Christian missionaries also opposed rainmaking, which they believed was a pagan practice. Before the end of the century,

most of the *dikgosi* had stopped it and instead held Christian prayer services at the start of the rainy season to appeal to God for rain.

The missionaries' influence on the use of alcohol

The missionaries often went beyond what is in the Bible when they tried to make the Batswana change their customs. For instance, the missionaries tried very hard to get the *dikgosi* to ban the drinking of alcohol, even though Jesus was known to drink wine. Because of missionary pressure, many *dikgosi*, starting with Khama, banned the brewing of traditional sorghum beer, *bojwala* and *khadi*. This law did not, however, prevent many Batswana from making and drinking alcohol.

The missionaries' influence on *bolata*

Bolata was also attacked by missionaries when they preached to Batswana about improving their society. Batswana were told that all people were equal before God and that it was therefore a sin for people to "own" others. A few Batswana Christians freed their *malata*, but most refused to do so. Nor did the *dikgosi* do anything to end *bolata*. However, in the southern areas of Botswana, many *malata* fled to work in South Africa. So the importance of *bolata* was reduced in places like Kweneng, Gangwaketse and Kgatleng. In Ngamiland and the Central District, *bolata* continued for a very long time, with many of the owners being Christians.

You have already planned and written essays, and looked in detail at writing paragraphs. However, to polish an essay, you need to begin it with an introduction and end with a conclusion.

How to write introductions and conclusions

1. Your introduction gives your point of view or argument, and your answer to the essay question. This should be stated in a single sentence, if possible. Then write one sentence saying which aspects you will discuss in order to support your general argument. (These aspects will be discussed fully in the paragraphs or body of the essay.)

2. The conclusion sums up your argument and rounds off the essay. Never introduce new information in the conclusion.

The rise of the independent churches

Before the 1890s, whites ran all the churches in southern Africa. Sometimes they allowed Africans to be in control of a church in a certain village, but these people were not allowed to decide their own policies and sets of beliefs. Because of this, a number of Africans began to criticise their churches, saying that they should have more say in church affairs.

Eventually, African Christians began to break away and establish their own churches. This movement was called Ethiopianism. In 1892, in the Cape Province, a man called Mangena Mokoni broke away from the Wesleyans, claiming the Wesleyans were racists. He felt that the Wesleyans ignored blacks in church and educational affairs. He founded the Ethiopian Church and soon other black priests began to create their own churches. Hence, Ethiopianism spread very fast.

Ethopianism quickly reached Botswana because similar conditions affected black ministers there. In 1893, a trained LMS Mongwaketse minister known as Mothowagae Motlogelwa began to assert his independence. He started a school in Kanye, which did not charge school fees and competed for students against the LMS school, which was not free. This eventually brought him into conflict with *Kgosi* Bathoen, who was a member of the LMS and who viewed it as the only official church in his territory. As Mothowagae became increasingly popular with LMS members and students, the white missionaries tried to move him to live in Lehututu.

At this point, Mothowagae separated from the church with about 100 other LMS members and formed the King Edward Bangwaketse Free Church. This was the first independent church in Botswana. Mothowagae came into conflict with both Bathoen and his successor, Seepapitso and he was eventually exiled to Lekgolobotlo in 1910. But between 1902 and 1910, Mothowagae was successful in organising three church branches in the Bangwaketse area. He converted Gobuamang, *Kgosi* of the Bakgatla-ba-ga-Mmanaana at Moshupa and most of the LMS members there.

Go back and read Chapter 5, on Botswana's traditional cultures. Then plan and write an essay comparing traditional religion to Christian-influenced religion. Concentrate on writing a good introduction and conclusion.

Mothowagae was not the only man to form an independent church in the period before 1910. There was also the Bakhurutshe Free Church in the Tati. Other Africans also preached the Ethiopian message. A number of these ministers went to work among the Bangwato, but always met with stiff opposition from Khama and his fellow LMS members. In 1901, five Ethiopians began preaching in Palapye and Khama quickly put them on trial because he and other Bangwato alleged that the foreigners had asked the Bangwato to worship them. The men were found guilty and their huts were burned down. Their Bangwato supporters were also fined. In later years, Khama and local government officials put other Ethiopians in prison.

All the early Ethiopians met with opposition from the *dikgosi* and the government and were unable to build up support early on. In later decades, however, a number of independent churches such as the Zion Christian Church (ZCC) would go on to build up a large following across Botswana.

Other changes to Tswana cultures

It was not only the missionaries who brought new ways of life to the Batswana. Other Europeans, such as traders and government officials, also introduced changes.

Traders brought all sorts of goods with them to sell to Batswana and many of these things met with willing buyers.

Western clothing

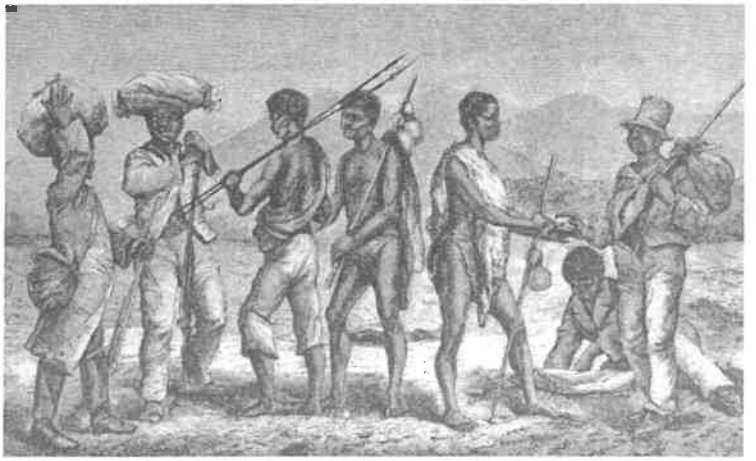
White traders had lots of Western accessories to sell, including beads, which were popular until the 1870s. After the 1870s, Batswana men and women began to adopt European clothing to replace traditional clothing.

Traditionally, Batswana women wore blankets made of leather or skins, which they stitched together and hung around their necks. They also wore large leather aprons around their waists. For centuries, Batswana women had used a shiny kind of clay, known as *sebilo*, which they kept on their hair or on their skin to keep it moist. But after the 1850s, more of them began to buy clothes and accessories from the traders, or material to make clothes. They wore these clothes to church, weddings and funerals. They bought dresses, scarves, hats and even white bridal gowns. Whereas most people used to go barefoot or in sandals, more women began to buy shoes and boots after the arrival of traders.

Most Batswana men began wearing hats, which were useful in a hot and sunny country like Botswana. They also adopted trousers and shirts, which replaced loincloths and blankets draped over the shoulders. Batswana also learned how to sew new kinds of clothes using leather and animal skins.

Source 2

Batswana in modern and traditional garb



What does Source 2 tell you about changes in Tswana culture in the nineteenth century?

The new elite

Traders did most of their business with the wealthy people within the Batswana communities. These included the *kgosi*, his closest relatives and other individuals who produced goods for sale. Because the *kgosi* controlled most of the trade with outsiders, he and his close supporters gained a lot of wealth from trade. Only after the 1870s or even later, were other individuals allowed to have open and direct dealings with traders when important goods such as ivory or feathers were traded.

To an extent, the members of the new elite lived extravagantly. *Kgosi* Sechele, for instance, had crystal chandeliers, fine porcelain and silver and even a machine that made soda water in his home. One of his later wives, an Amandebele princess, enjoyed drinking French champagne.

A new diet

Traders also brought changes to the traditional Tswana diet. In fact, the new kinds of food almost completely replaced the older types. Long ago, Batswana ate very little meat. They lived mainly on a diet of sorghum, milk, beans and a few vegetables such as squashes and pumpkins. They drank water, milk or one of the brewed beverages made from sorghum. Occasionally, Batswana would eat the meat of cattle that had died. Only rarely did Batswana kill one of their livestock for food.

When traders arrived in Botswana, they brought with them mealie meal, flour made out of maize. Because this was the cheapest kind of starchy food available, it soon became a very popular dish for Batswana to eat. In many families, it even replaced sorghum as the principal part of the diet. Maize meal was also the main type of food given to workers at the South African mines, where many Batswana learned to eat it. Although this kind of food was almost unknown about 100 years ago, today it is the most common part of the Batswana staple diet and is locally known as *phaletshe*.

The early traders also sold tea, coffee and sugar to the Batswana. These were previously unknown and offered a great deal of variety to the Batswana diet. Sugar was popular for two reasons: it replaced honey, which was scarce, as a sweetener for food and it enabled Batswana to brew beer with a much higher alcohol content. Before sugar arrived, *bojalwa* had very little alcohol. With sugar added, the mixture became more potent. Drunkenness became a far more serious problem among the Batswana. This is perhaps why several *dikgosi*, including Khama, Bathoen and Sekgoma Letsholathebe, outlawed the brewing of strong alcohol at the turn of the century.

Early traders also sold large amounts of hard liquor, concentrating on sales of a potent brandy known as Cape Smoke. These sales stopped, at least legally, after 1890 because the government outlawed the sale of liquor to Africans. So Batswana had to be content with drinking *bojalwa* and then only if their *kgosi* allowed them to do so.

New technology

Other items brought by white traders allowed the Batswana to do more work with less effort. Guns made hunting easier and allowed the main *merafe* to become rich through selling ivory and other game products. Many wealthy Batswana bought wagons, which made transport much easier. Wagons replaced oxen, which allowed bigger loads to be carried. This form of transport was helpful to the Batswana, who moved constantly between their villages, lands and cattle posts.

Also important to farmers were ploughs brought by the traders. These allowed people to cultivate large areas with much less effort. Before, all ploughing had been done by hand with a hoe. With oxen pulling ploughshares, the Batswana were able to produce more crops. Because wagons were available, it was possible for people with large yields of crops to transport the produce into town where they could sell it. This type of farming was only practised by the wealthier Batswana, who could afford the high prices for ploughs and wagons. But once they had bought these items, they could make a lot of money by selling their crops to traders.

Negative influences

There were also some negative effects of the trade boom, however. Goods sold by traders were often much cheaper than those produced by Batswana artisans, especially iron goods and clothes. This meant that Batswana blacksmiths were forced out of business and today these skills have almost vanished. Sewing of karosses remained for longer than blacksmithing, but by the 1930s, it was being done by fewer individuals.

A further negative effect of trade was the destruction of Botswana's wildlife and forests, which were once very rich natural resources. Early European traders slaughtered thousands of animals and the Batswana were able to do the same once they bought guns. No one knows how many animals were killed, but today game is only found in a small portion of the country. Before the 1850s, big game could be found in abundance almost everywhere.

1. Explain why it is important not to destroy wildlife indiscriminately.

2. How are wild animals useful to the lives of Batswana?

How far-reaching was the influence on Tswana culture?

A number of changes, religious, social and technological, came to Botswana with the arrival of Europeans. These changes affected some Batswana, but not all. This was because:

- There were not many Europeans in Botswana and not everyone lived near them.
- Many Batswana who opposed Christianity stuck to a traditional lifestyle.
- Many Batswana were too poor to obtain the goods that the traders had to offer.
- Only a small percentage of children went to school.

Even though more Europeans arrived in Botswana after 1885 once the Protectorate was declared, they did not have a great influence. Many of these whites lived apart from the Batswana and rarely mixed with them socially. For this reason, they did not have much impact on local culture.

In the end, many aspects of Tswana culture remained the same. *Motse*, for example, were still organised into traditional ward structures. Even after the Tswana culture changed, the same families were running the *merafe* in much the same way as in traditional times. Some of the laws they used to run public events and judge *kgotla* cases were new, but probably most of their procedure was based on the ways of past generations.

Here is the introduction to an essay on changes in Tswana culture from 1910 to 1940. Write the rest of the essay, as well as a conclusion.

From 1840 to 1910 the main changes that occurred in the Batswana way of life were due to the influence of Europeans. Batswana tended to pick what they liked about European culture, rather than adopt everything they saw. So the Batswana banned *bogwera*, but they continued to use age regiments; they adopted Christianity, but they continued to believe in *bongaka*; and they ended rainmaking, but began holding prayer services for rain.

What have I learnt?

1. What made Robert Moffat such an important missionary?
2. Which Batswana were the first to adopt Christianity?
3. Describe three ways in which missionaries tried to change Tswana culture.
4. Why did some people try to form Ethiopian churches?
5. What new foods did the Batswana adopt?
6. Which group do you think had more influence on Batswana, missionaries or traders? Answer this question in the form of a comparative essay. Remember to plan your essay and to write an introduction and conclusion.

Chapter Fourteen

Years of pestilence

Introduction

During the 1890s, the Bechuanaland Protectorate suffered the worst series of natural disasters in its modern history. Years of drought, combined with the terrible locust invasions, made it impossible to grow food. At the same time, a terrible new disease, rinderpest, killed about 90% of the country's cattle and a large number of game animals. During this period about 20% of the human population died.

Droughts

Botswana, of course, is a semi-arid country that has good rains on an irregular basis. Many elderly people in Botswana say that in "the old days" it rained every year, but this is not true.

During the 1800s there were many severe drought periods. Droughts were recorded in every decade during the century, with the worst ones being in 1845-51, 1856-62 and 1876-79. The second of these dry periods was particularly severe, and many people died of starvation after a series of crop failures. In times of famine, disease spread quickly. In 1862, smallpox killed a large number of people.

Because the Batswana lived in such a dry environment, they had developed ways of coping with such problems. People who owned goats, cattle and sheep would, if their crops failed, exchange some of their animals for sorghum. This they could do with the Batswana in their own village and those in other villages, or perhaps they could sell their stock to white traders. Another way of getting food in times of drought was to hunt. In the nineteenth century there were large game herds in all

In the last paragraph:

1. Identify the main sentence of the paragraph.

2. Identify the three points that support this sentence.

3. What words are used to link this sentence together?

areas of Botswana. Alternatively, people could forage, that is, gather wild fruits and nuts to eat. All the peoples of Botswana knew how to gather such foods.

Migration

People could also survive tough times by finding a job. During the nineteenth century not many paid jobs were available inside Botswana. Most people were independent farmers who worked for themselves or with family members. However, during the Difaqane, Batswana began to look for jobs beyond the Orange River. Some went to work on farms in the Cape Colony, where they herded cattle and sheep. As commercial farming expanded beyond the Cape into the South African Republic (SAR) more Batswana entered the work force.

During the nineteenth century, the number of Batswana who engaged in migrant labour was not high, but it was continually increasing.

After the 1840s, Batswana stopped migrating to the Cape, but many began to work for Boer farmers in the SAR after the Batswana-Boer War. Usually, such people were paid a cow or two a year, about the same rate as if they had worked for Batswana cattle owners.

After diamonds were discovered in Kimberley in 1867, a huge diamond industry developed, which needed large numbers of workers. Many Batswana, along with other southern Africans, walked long distances to Kimberley to get work. Most migrants were young men who wanted money to buy a gun or perhaps to buy cattle to pay *bogadi*. Presumably, other migrants went to the mines to avoid starvation during drought.

Disasters of the 1890s

Locusts

Locusts had not been seen in Botswana for many decades when they began appearing around 1890. At first, they were merely a nuisance and provided people with variety in their diet. As the 1890s went on, the locust swarms became bigger

and spread all over the country.

Drought

When the rain failed in 1895, there was no great problem because grain had been stored. But the 1896 rains also failed and locusts ate whatever had grown. A missionary reported:

Source 1

All of the tribes, except perhaps Linchwe's (the Bakgatla), are at present very short of food and many have not sufficient food for their families. They are, however, making an effort to obtain money for the purpose of buying food by going out to work in Kimberley, Jagersfontein, Johannesburg and other places.

Using Source 1 as a starting point, write a paragraph on how people usually coped with drought in the nineteenth century.

Rinderpest

That same year, the drought was compounded by a cattle disease that was more devastating than any other animal disease before or since. This disease was called rinderpest. In Setswana it was known as *bolowane*. Rinderpest was unknown to Africa before 1893. The Italian army that invaded Ethiopia brought in infected cattle from outside Africa. Because African animals had never been exposed to the disease before, they had no way of resisting it. When a disease comes to a continent for the first time, the situation is called virgin soil epidemic. These epidemics always result in very high mortality for the species that are attacked.

Rinderpest started in Ethiopia in 1893 and spread south, through East Africa and down through Malawi and Zimbabwe. It killed approximately 90% of the cattle in areas that it passed through. It not only killed cattle, but also many other hoofed animals such as zebras, wildebeest, antelopes and buffalo. It did not kill small mammals, birds or small stock.

The governments in southern Africa knew that rinderpest was going to arrive. But in the 1890s, governments in the area were not very powerful and lacked money. There were no

cordon fences then to stop animals moving from one area to another. Travellers used oxen to pull their wagons and so cattle were moving over large distances and spreading the disease quickly. Most governments tried to stop cattle moving along the main roads if they suspected rinderpest was in the area. But this method did not work, as people could still travel on other roads.

In 1896, rinderpest reached Botswana from Zimbabwe and it devastated the cattle along the main road from Francistown to Lobatse. This road was then the main route between South Africa and Zimbabwe. In Botswana, as in other parts of Africa, about 90% of cattle died. One traveller, stranded at Ramotswa in May, wrote:

Source 2

Hundreds of dead lying in every stage of decomposition, behind the bushes, in places a dozen a batch! The whole air was vitiated by the stench of them and amidst them we had to camp! I observed that the natives were busily skinning all the dead beasts and apparently making biltong of the flesh . . . I don't see how this country can escape a famine now, their crops have all failed from drought and the remnants are eaten by locusts; their cattle are nearly all dead! I suppose a score of live cattle where there should have been a thousand or two! Khama alone is said to have lost 70,000 or 90,000 head.

Rinderpest was a tragedy because it destroyed the means by which the Batswana could have avoided starvation. But now there were no cattle to sell for food and no animals to be hunted. All the common game animals, such as springbok, gemsbok, zebra, wildebeest and others, had died just like the cattle.

Source 3

The devastation by the rinderpest

People began to starve. 20% of the Batswana died. Not all people died of starvation, but because lack of food weakened them, they often died of diseases like dysentery, malaria and influenza.

Write a well-structured paragraph on the reasons why rinderpest spread so quickly and fatally through Africa.

Averting the disaster

During 1897, the Batswana's fortunes changed. The British South Africa Company (BSAC) was building a railway line from the Cape to Zimbabwe along the road through eastern Botswana. Building this railway required a lot of workers, who were obtained from the Batswana living along the railway, such as the Bangwaketse, Bakwena, Bakgatla and Bangwato. Many men earned money by working in construction. Others made money by transport riding.

WORDS

Transport riding means taking goods and people between villages by wagon. It was the highest paying job for many years.

Source 4

Building the railway line

But by the end of the year, the railway had passed through the country to Bulawayo. When it was finished, many Batswana found themselves with no work. With the railway finished and no jobs available locally, Batswana left for South Africa to find work.

Migrant labour and its causes and effects will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

At this time of need, some British citizens in London stepped in to help the Batswana avoid starvation. They sent food on the train to Gaborone and offered it free to the Batswana. At first, chiefs like Sebele and Bathoen refused to take it, as they valued their independence. But as starvation continued, they relented and sent wagons regularly to get supplies. Khama also refused to take free food, insisting that Bangwato pay the wholesale cost of the food. However, some of his people travelled south and got it free.

In Ngamiland, there was no free food distribution as it was too far from the railway. *Kgosi* Sekgoma took drastic measures there and managed to stop the spread of rinderpest in certain areas by restricting travel. He kept control over existing food to make sure there was no famine. He also took care of orphaned children, sending them out to places where cattle still existed.

During the period of famine, a new way was found to raise some money. After the construction of the railway, it became possible to send wood to Kimberley very easily on the train. Batswana living close to the railway began to cut down trees and sell the timber.

By 1910, almost all the area along the railway line had no trees left. By cutting so many trees down, the Batswana sacrificed long-term agricultural prosperity for short-term gain. Areas that have no trees tend to be less fertile and more susceptible to drought than areas with forest. No new forests were planted as replacements.

Taxation and its effect on migrant labour

British government officials were not so unhappy that the Batswana had suffered a disaster. Many of them hoped that the collapse of farming would force Batswana to get wage-paying jobs and thus serve the imperialists.

In Botswana and, indeed throughout Africa, the government demanded hut tax, which forced Africans to work. Colonial

governments did this because they needed money to pay for their activities. But they also wanted to force Africans out of agriculture and into taking up jobs. They wanted them to earn money, so that they would buy European products. Europeans also knew that if lots of Africans started working, then wages would decrease. This was important at a time in history when there were not enough people to work in South Africa's mines and businesses.

So in 1899, the government imposed hut tax on all adult men in the Bechuanaland Protectorate. Under the new law, each man had to pay £1 a year in cash to the government.

Nowadays, £1 does not sound like a lot of money, but in those days it was difficult for most men to come up with the amount.

This was because there were very few jobs in the Protectorate, which had no large-scale business or industry. In addition, now that many cattle were dead and there were few animals left to hunt, few people had any goods that they could sell for cash. Hut tax was introduced at a time when very few people could afford to pay it.

What happened in Botswana was that large numbers of men were forced to leave the country and engage in migrant labour in order to pay their hut tax. Prior to 1899, migrant labour had occurred only at times of distress or when someone needed to earn the money to buy something, like a gun. But after taxation began, far more people were forced to become migrant workers.

The government used the money obtained from the hut tax to pay its own officials. Most of these officials were policemen, whose main duty was to collect taxes. Very little money that the government collected went towards helping the Batswana to improve their standard of living. Few roads were built and there were no government-sponsored schools or hospitals for many decades.

No law had more impact on the lives of ordinary Batswana than the one that introduced hut tax to the country. For the next 70 years, most young men would be forced to leave the country in order to find money.

Going to South Africa

A significant number of men went to work at either the Kimberley diamond mines or the Johannesburg gold mines. This was the easiest way to obtain work. The mines had employees, called recruiters, in all the villages. These men signed up Batswana to work at the mines, usually for a year, at a set rate per month (usually £3). This arrangement was known as a contract. Mine recruits also got free transport to the mines, as well as free accommodation and food.

Others did not want to work at the mines. They thought that the wages at the mines were very low and that the work was very hard. Also, they did not like the fact that mine workers could not leave the mines after work was finished and that they were forced to work for one contract without a holiday. These people usually walked to Johannesburg or some other town in South Africa, to look for a job outside of mining.

This group of migrants tried to find jobs in businesses, such as factories and shops, or worked for railroads or in construction. These jobs paid more money than the mines did, but did not offer free accommodation or food. Batswana with such jobs had to find a house to rent and cope with the living costs.

Almost all Botswana's migrant workers went to South Africa because jobs there offered the highest wages. There were much smaller groups who went to work in Rhodesia, such as Bakalanga who went to Bulawayo and Basubia who worked on the railways and at the Rhodesian mines. Many residents of the Kgalagadi and from northern parts of Ngamiland went to Namibia, where they herded livestock for white farmers.

Do some research on the conditions on the early gold mines in Johannesburg or on the diamond mines in Kimberley. Then write up your research in the form of a letter from a migrant worker to his wife back in Botswana.

Women did not have to pay hut tax because the government wanted to keep them in the Protectorate to engage in agriculture and look after children while their husbands were working in South Africa. In the southern parts of the Protectorate, though, many women migrated. Initially this was because of starvation. Later, on they went for other reasons. Along Botswana's border with South Africa, there were many Boer farmers who needed people to work for them for low wages. Some Batswana women liked working there because it was close to their homes and it provided them with a way to make money. Sometimes, a family might send one of its daughters to go and earn cash while the rest farmed at home. Many other women, often unmarried, went to work in South African towns, earning higher wages as maids or factory workers.

Almost all of the Batswana migrants returned to live inside the Protectorate. Younger men would work for a number of contracts and then come back and buy cattle. After that, they would be able to sell a beast every year and thus pay their taxes. Other men bought ploughs and tried to increase their yields from agriculture, in order to sell part of the crop to pay taxes. Batswana women tended to return home in order to marry.

So poor was the country, that when the British government demanded £1 from every man, whole villages lost their adult male populations for most of the year. For many Batswana life changed drastically. In many areas, especially in the south east and north east, more than half the population was absent most of the time. Women, children and the elderly remained and they relied to a large extent on money sent to them by their male relatives. Villages like Molepolole, Kanye and Mochudi became empty of men, due to the large numbers of deaths and the loss of men to migrant labour.

Did any of your parents, grandparents or older relatives become migrants? People who were migrants can be a useful source of information on this part of history. You can collect information from them in many ways, You could ask for old letters or diaries, but it would be more direct to use them as **oral sources.**

1. Make a list of questions you would like to ask about their experiences.
2. Make an appointment to speak to the person.
3. Work through the list of questions, writing down or tape recording their answers.
4. Thank the person at the end of the interview.
5. Write up the answers as a paragraph or essay.

Refer back to Chapter 1, where there is a case study on using oral sources.

The Langeberg rebellion and its effect on Batswana thinking

Why did the Batswana not protest against the fact that hut tax was imposed upon them at a time when they were suffering so horribly?

Was it because they failed to realise how difficult it would be for them to pay? Or was it because they were grateful for the food the British gave them? Probably not, because the Batswana in South Africa had seen what had happened to people who had resisted hut tax.

In the Cape Colony, the Batlhaping and Barolong had been affected by rinderpest and drought just like the residents of the Bechuanaland Protectorate. But they were also very bitter about the way the British had treated them. For instance, in 1886, just after the British arrived to protect them, the Batlhaping and Barolong lost 92% of their land to their protectors.

See Chapter 11 for more details of this incident.

Later, in 1896, when rinderpest was spreading through the Bechuanaland Protectorate, the British authorities in the Cape began shooting Batswana cattle there because they claimed it was African cattle that were spreading rinderpest. When the rinderpest arrived, the British continued shooting many Batswana cattle. Of course, a Motswana cannot just stand by if his cattle are killed and people began to get angry.

In 1897, when the rinderpest arrived and droughts had caused famine, the British authorities imposed the hut tax on the Batlhaping and Barolong. The Batlhaping, led by *Kgosi* Luka Jantjie and *Kgosi* Galeshwe, decided to rebel against British rule. Luka and his Batlhaping retreated into the Langeberg Hills, where they were surrounded during a five-month siege.

Eventually, after the death of over 1 500 men, the Batlhaping were defeated and many of their leaders were executed. Luka, who had been killed in battle, had his head cut off, which a British officer boiled in his kitchen to obtain the skull as a trophy. Meanwhile, about 4 000 Batlhaping were captured and sent to Cape Town, where they were forced to work for white farmers like slaves for many years. This group consisted largely of women and children.

What do you think Bathoen I meant when he said, "They have killed him, but they did so after he had fought"?

The Batswana in the Protectorate knew what the British were doing in the Cape. Bathoen I of the Bangwaketse called Luka a hero, saying in *kgotla*, "They have killed him, but they did so after he had fought." At that moment he turned to a British policeman, asking: "How do the white men fight?" He was

told, "When the government fights, no one gets the best against it; the government always wins."

Now that Botswana has one of Africa's richest economies, with mining, business and large towns, it is hard to imagine that none of this existed 30 years ago. Today, very few Batswana work outside their own country, but prior to independence very few worked inside it.

Before 1910, the Bechuanaland Protectorate had no European type of towns of any size, nor did it offer any jobs in business. Not everybody had cattle that could be sold for money. Africans were also excluded from engaging in trading and business. For this reason, the country was highly vulnerable to the kind of troubles that occurred in the 1890s.

Batswana and the South African War, 1899-1902

Perhaps the main factor that reduced suffering after the disasters of the mid-1890s was the outbreak of the South African War, better known as the Anglo-Boer War. This war broke out in 1899, after many years of tension between the Boers in the South African Republic and the British. The British government wanted to increase British participation in the SAR's huge gold mining industry. The Boers refused to back down in the face of British pressure.

Both the British and the Boers tried to keep Africans out of the fighting. They said they were fighting a white man's war. But Africans, including the Batswana, often took part in the action. All the Batswana *merafe* sided with the British.

Why do you think the British and Boers wanted the Africans to keep out of the fighting?

When fighting broke out, the Boers decided to try to take Khama's capital, Palapye. They wanted to disrupt the British effort by controlling the railway. Khama's men were mobilised rapidly and British troops came in by train. Due to this quick response, the Boers backed off and no fighting took place in Gammangwato.

In the south, the Boers approached Sebele and they agreed not to fight against each other. Bathoen and his Bangwaketse also agreed to stay out of the fighting.

Only the Bakgatla, as we shall see, entered the war.

Batswana benefited from the war because large numbers of British troops entered the Protectorate. A couple of years of reasonable rains had allowed the Batswana not only to eat, but also to sell their crops to the British at very high prices. Many jobs were available at the British camps so there was no need to migrate. During most of the war, the railway was disrupted so Batswana with wagons could earn a living from transport riding.

Another way of earning cash was undertaken by more daring people. The Boers had surrounded the British garrison of Mafikeng, which was then the Protectorate's capital. This siege

Source 6

Troops in Botswana during the Anglo-Boer War

lasted for many months, during which time the inhabitants of Mafikeng had very little food. The inhabitants relied on Africans who brought food close to town and smuggled it in at night while the Boers were asleep. Bakwena, Bangwaketse and Baro-long men made a lot of money from this smuggling, because they were in a position to demand high prices. However, many were caught by the Boers.

The Battle of Derdepoort

The Bakgatla of *Kgosi* Linchwe were very involved in the war. At the outset of the fighting, the British mistakenly thought he might join with the people he had fled from 30 years before. Soon after the war began, Boer soldiers began to raid Bakgatla cattle posts. They also set up a military camp just across the border from Linchwe, at Derdepoort.

When the British approached Linchwe to help them fight the Boers at Derdepoort, he agreed. The British wanted to do all the fighting themselves, but wanted Linchwe's men to guide and support them.

An attack was planned for 25 November 1899. Three Bakgatla regiments joined a small British force that was armed with a rapid firing machine gun, the most deadly weapon of that time. The attack was to begin at dawn when the British were to fire on the Boer camp from some hills above. Linchwe's men were eager to fight and began to fire shots. Then they found that the British had left. They kept fighting, pouring rifle fire into the Boer camp from the hillsides. Without British help, the Bakgatla won a clear victory, killing 20 Boers and taking many prisoners.

Why had the British not taken part in the battle?

It was due to cowardice. The British got afraid just before the battle and left without telling the Bakgatla. After Linchwe's victory, the British commander, Col. Holsworth, claimed that Linchwe was not following orders and had attacked the Boers without permission.

How do you think Linchwe felt about Col. Holsworth after the Battle of Derdepoort? How do you think this influenced his later actions? Role-play an imagined confrontation between them.

After winning this victory with no help from the British who were supposed to be protecting him, Linchwe fought the rest of the war against the Boers without paying attention to what the British said. Fighting continued, because Linchwe had not succeeded in driving the Boers out of the Derdepoort area. In December, the Boers retaliated and burned down Sikwane. Linchwe responded in the following months by sending his men to operate in the SAR, where they cut off the Boer supplies going to Derdepoort. Due to this pressure, the Boers were forced to pull out.

After the war

In the months that followed, Bakgatla soldiers were sent on cattle raiding expeditions against Boer farmers in the SAR. They captured at least 10 000 animals. As a result, the Bakgatla were able to rebuild their herds that had been decimated by rinderpest. By 1901 the Bakgatla men controlled most of the countryside between Derdepoort and Rustenburg. The Boer farmers had been forced to leave. This was the land that the Bakgatla had lived on before the Boers arrived in the 1840s.

Once the war was over, Linchwe asked the British for the rights over this land. All over South Africa many Africans had helped the British against the Boers, because they hoped the British would replace Boer rule with a democratic system.

However, the British protectors once again betrayed their African allies.

British policy insisted that the defeated Boers should be treated well so that they would live in a united South Africa. The British gave them all their land back and changed none of their racist laws. Apart from the Bakgatla, who became wealthy in cattle, few Batswana who helped the British were better off after the war than before.

What have I learnt?

1. a) What was rinderpest?
   b) What were the immediate and longer-term results of the rinderpest epidemic of the 1890s?
2. Draw up a table comparing the way the Batswana dealt with drought and disaster in the nineteenth century and the new ways the Batswana coped with the disasters of the 1890s.
3. a) What was hut tax?
   b) How did it affect the lives of the Batswana?
   c) Why did Batswana oppose hut tax?
4. In what ways did the Batswana participate in the South African War?
5. Indicate whether the following are causes or effects of migrant labour:
   a) Drought
   b) Female-headed households
   c) Decline of agricultural production
   d) Rinderpest
   e) Lack of income generation
   f) Desire to buy guns
   g) Lack of economic development
   h) Tax
   i) Lack of able young men
   j) Land alienation
   k) Desire to see other places
   Explain why.

Chapter Fifteen

The Kgalagadi and Chobe

Introduction

The Kgalagadi and Chobe are Botswana's least densely populated areas. Due to the extreme lack of surface water, very few people can live in the Kgalagadi desert, which runs diagonally from Tsabong north east to Chobe. Most residents of the Kgalagadi are Khoe and Bakgalagadi. The two main centres of population in the Kgalagadi are Matsheng and Ghanzi. Chobe is equally dry, with the exception of the area along the Chobe River. Due to the prevalence of tsetse fly and mosquitoes in the river valley, it can also support only a small population. Most Chobe residents are Basubia or Bekuhane.

Source 1

Map showing the Kgalagadi and Chobe

Matsheng, centre of the Bakgalagadi

In the Matsheng area, there are four large pans in close proximity: Hukuntsi, Lehututu, Lokgwabe and Tshane. Matsheng is the base of the Bangologa section of the Bakgalagadi.

Over time, the Bangologa of the Matsheng area became heavily involved in the trade of skins to the Barolong and Batlhaping to the south. Every year, groups of Bakgalagadi would leave home with many animal skins (such as jackal skins) and sell them for goods such as iron, *sebilo*, grain and tobacco. The Barolong would then sew the skins into clothes and blankets.

The Bangologa of Matsheng remained independent of the Batswana control for most of the nineteenth century. For the most part, chiefs such as Serame and Lenyadi ruled their own people. Bangologa traded up into the Ghanzi area and in Ngamiland and as a result they settled far and wide.

However, throughout the nineteenth century, Batswana made attempts to dominate regions of the Kgalagadi, including the Matsheng area. They did not always succeed in political domination, but often became involved in trade. For instance, *Kgosi* Sebego took many of his people from Gangwaketse into the Kgalagadi after he fought with the Amandebele in 1832. First he set himself up in Matsheng, where he worked hard to establish his political domination over the Bakgalagadi. He demanded tribute from the Bangologa and Bashaga and when a group of them refused, he even burned a whole village. Once he had control of Matsheng, he moved most of his people north to Ghanzi. After 1835, he attempted to subdue the area's Basarwa and Bakgalagadi and to take over the trade going south from Ghanzi to Matsheng to the northern Cape.

Sebego was at first successful, as his *mephato* were the strongest around. However, his subjects kept harassing him and Sebego had to use force to maintain authority. Around 1838, Sebego's followers were destroyed by outbreaks of malaria and his cattle found Ghanzi too dry for their liking. He was forced to retreat to Matsheng, which remained his

base until 1844. In the 1850s the Bangwaketse again made some attempts to take over the Matsheng area. They never really succeeded in this as their time was often taken up by internal feuds and wars with other groups, such as the Barolong. Despite his best efforts, Sebego and his followers (who made up about half of the Bangwaketse) were unable to prosper in the desert. Eventually they left for the Cape, where Sebego was murdered by his enemies.

Bakgalagadi traditions make it clear that they resisted the control of Sebego. One famous Mongologa named Mosuswe is said to have led this resistance in both Matsheng and Ghanzi. He is also said to have fought against other Batswana such as the Batawana.

Source 2

Ghanzi

Ghanzi is a region in the western Kgalagadi with an abundance of limestone wells and pans. It has sweet grasses and is fairly well wooded. Well into the late nineteenth century, it had a large game population, including big elephant and rhino herds.

Ghanzi is the area of Botswana with the largest proportion of Khoe-speakers. A Khoe-speaking group known as the Naro has long lived there. The Naro-Khoe had a varied lifestyle. The men hunted animals with bows and arrows and the women gathered wild fruits. But they also were heavily involved in trading as goods from the Okavango were being sent south to be exchanged on the border of what is now South Africa. Acting as go-betweens for other groups, they traded ivory, eggshell beads, skins and feathers in exchange for iron goods, tobacco, beads and millet. Moreover, the Naro-Khoe had artisans of their own who made excellent karosses and bone arrow points. They also had smiths to work the metal that they got from the south. This trade must have had its origins in the eighteenth century.

Why do you think the trade started in the eighteenth century? What sources could you use to find out?

When Sebego left the Ghanzi area in the 1830s, a new leader emerged among the Naro-Khoe. This was Dukuri, who organised cattle raids and military expeditions against his neighbours. When white traders began entering his territory in the early 1850s, he sold ivory to them. Dukuri ranked among the more powerful Basarwa leaders, most of whom lived in Namibia. According to Naro-Khoe tradition, Dukuri ruled in this way:

Source 3

He stayed over the entire region between Rietfontein in the west, the Grootlaagte in the north, Okwa in the south and deep in the sandveld along the Epikuro. In the dry season he stayed at Ghanse and Kautsa and in the rainy season he hunted along the Grootlaagte. He was very mighty and surrounded himself with Bushmen [Naro-Khoe] at all times . . . His houses were filled with spears and other weapons. He was the supreme warlord. At his summons the Bushmen had to assemble versus neighbouring tribes. He collected annual tribute from the families, consisting of skins, ivory, ostrich eggshell necklaces and other items. He was, moreover, the supreme judge who adjudicated over family disputes . . . The honour of a **kgosi** was hereditary in those days and the Bushmen [Naro-Khoe] were totally independent. The Batuana [Batawana] did not dare to set foot in their region and the Hottentots [Khoe] only entered it on raids.

Dukuri's downfall

Dukuri's most daring action, which eventually led to his downfall, took place while the Batawana were fighting the Bakololo in 1854.

See Chapters 3 and 4 for more details of this clash.

During the confusion, Dukuri's men captured large numbers of Batawana cattle. Over the next few years, Letsholathebe invited Dukuri and other Naro-Khoe leaders to his capital to conclude a peace settlement. Instead of extending friendship, Letsholathebe killed them in cold blood.

For the next 40 years, the Naro-Khoe were subjects of the Batawana.

Letsholathebe subsequently made the Naro-Khoe *malata*. As such, the Naro-Khoe had to pay tribute, provide herding and hunting labour when asked and send children to work as domestic servants in the homes of Batawana royals. Batawana established large cattleposts in the area and headmen gathered tribute. Meanwhile, a few trusted Naro-Khoe were given guns to hunt with, with the profits going to the Batawana.

Van Zyl settles in Ghanzi

This situation changed in 1874 when a Boer from the SAR named Hendrik van Zyl asked to settle in Ghanzi with some of his friends. Letsholathebe agreed, because some Nama-Khoe from Namibia had been raiding Ghanzi and were presenting problems. He let the well-armed Boers run the area on condition that he received half of all ivory they shot. Van Zyl, whom the Batawana called *Raubase*, was to be the headman of Ghanzi and was not to interfere in the affairs of other Batawana districts.

Van Zyl did very well as a Motawana headman, using Naro-Khoe labourers to cultivate his fields and tend his thousands of cattle. He also gave his subjects firearms and horses to hunt for him. The wealth he generated through ivory and trading enabled him to erect a lavish two-storey house with stained glass windows and carpets.

When Letsholathebe died, there was no strong Batawana leader until 1876. Van Zyl began to assert his independence.

After 1877, Van Zyl and his Naro-Khoe hunters began to kill large numbers of elephants north of Ghanzi in the area outside his jurisdiction. In two exceptional days, apparently, he acquired the tusks of about 100 elephants, around 8 000 lbs of ivory. Van Zyl did not pay the required tribute to Moremi, the young *kgosi* of the Batawana, after these expeditions. Van Zyl also enraged Moremi by not going to live at the capital when asked to. But the Boer's heyday was nearly over.

After the second of his famed elephant hunts, Van Zyl heard that Moremi had sent out a regiment to acquire the *sehuba*. Sensing trouble, Van Zyl invited a number of Nama-Khoe from Namibia to share a large consignment of peach brandy he said he had. When a mounted Nama-Khoe party arrived, they found themselves confronted by Moremi's regiment. A gunfight ensued, with a large number of deaths. Following this, Moremi burned down Van Zyl's house and drove him west. In 1880 Van Zyl was murdered, apparently by some Naro-Khoe whom the Boer had wronged in the past.

After Van Zyl's death, the Batawana used Ghanzi for cattle herding and also made periodic raids to get taxes and *malata*. But the threat of violence from the Nama-Khoe meant they did not exploit the area fully.

The BSAC takes over Ghanzi

In the 1890s the British government set its eye on taking Ghanzi as crown land.

The reasons for this are laid out in Chapter 12, which describes how the government and the BSAC were working together. Cecil Rhodes, of the BSAC, wanted to put Ghanzi under his company's control and government officials he had bribed did their best to meet his wishes.

From 1894, the government sent policemen and officials to get *Kgosi* Sekgoma of the Batawana to give up Ghanzi. He always refused. Meanwhile, Rhodes had organised some 200 Boers in South Africa who were waiting to go and settle in

Ghanzi. Most of these Boers were poor whites who just wanted to receive a free farm, sell it off for profit and then return to South Africa much richer.

Despite Sekgoma's opposition to giving up Ghanzi, the British government prevailed in the end. A number of bribed witnesses were induced to declare that Ghanzi had always been vacant land, inhabited only by a few roving "Bushmen". In 1897 Sekgoma eventually agreed to give up Ghanzi if no more of his land was to be taken. The British agreed and in 1898 the party of Boers moved into Ghanzi, taking up their farms. Very few stayed more than five years, but they had obtained ownership of much land. In later years, more Boers would arrive to occupy the area.

Do you think Sekgoma had any alternatives when he agreed to give up Ghanzi? Was it a mistake?

The saddest aspect of Ghanzi's history is that the Naro-Khoe inhabitants of Ghanzi lost all their land to the Boer farmers. No other group in Botswana lost more due to the arrival of white settlers. They became a landless group, dependent on low-paying jobs from local Boers.

Source 4

God has given us this land and then has taken it away from us. We are working for nothing because we no longer own the land.

Source 5

These poems are a lament about the loss of a "string", or a song for rainmaking. Because the Khoe and San people lost their land, their circumstances became unsettled and traditions such as rainmaking were lost. The first lament may be read as the sorrow of a man who cannot carry out his father's traditions. The poems may also be read as a sign of the end of the !Xam way of life, and therefore the end of the !Xam people.

Comment on the value of these poems as part of the historical record.

Xaa-ttin's Lament
By Stephen Watson

My father sang: the string is broken;
things have changed from what they were.
He sang: "I cannot hear the ringing now
I once used to hear, sounding in the sky."
He sang: "I feel the string has gone from me;
the song is gone; for me things do not change.
Sleeping, no sound comes calling in my sleep.
I cannot hear a voice, the voice once within me,
Which would come calling through my dreams."

It said: "Xaa-ttin, are you so sunk in sleep
that you can't call, don't speak to me
as you once would, and loved to do,
when you were with me as my pupil?
Xaa-ttin, I have waited for your word,
a single word that said you were not dead.
O Xaa-ttin, I have listened long for you,
to learn you still lead out the rain-bull.
Tell me you make rain, as I once taught you to."

My father sang, the string has broken,
that nothing was as he'd once heard it.
He said: "I cannot hear the ringing now
I once heard often, the sorcerer still alive."
He sang: "I fear the string has gone from me,
that things are changed, and cannot call me.
Sleeping, I cannot hear I cannot hear it.
There is silence where a song once would ring.
There is nothing now, where it once sounded."

Here is another extract from a similar poem by Stephen Watson:

Because
of this string
because of a people
breaking the string,
this earth, my place
is the place
of something
a thing broken
that does not
stop sounding,
breaking within me.

The Chobe region

The Chobe area has never been part of the territory of any of the large Batswana *merafe*. In the Chobe region, the Basubia are the main ethnic group and they refer to themselves as the Bekuhane. It appears that the Bekuhane are closely linked to the peoples of Zambia and that they migrated across the Chobe River into Botswana hundreds of years ago.

Source 6

According to oral traditions, the Bekuhane once lived with the Hambukushu and Wayeyi at some hills in the eastern Chobe.

In recent centuries, the Bekuhane have settled in small villages along the Chobe flood plain. In these places they lived by fishing, farming and owning cattle.

For a long time, the Bekuhane were united and maintained their independence despite occasional attacks from Balozi and other Zambian groups. Their land was known as the Kingdom of Itenge, named after one of their rulers. Only around 1876 did they split up. Liswani II fled the area, fearing he would be killed by the Balozi. He and his followers settled near the Boteti River.

The other long-term inhabitants of the Chobe area are the Shua-Khoe, who ruled themselves until the arrival of the British. Though the Bangwato tried to subdue the Shua-Khoe and turn them into *malata*, the Shua-Khoe resisted. A man named Maruza and his supporters stopped these attempts by killing a number of Bangwato.

Also attracted to the area were refugees from more violent places. Various Bakalanga fled there from Amandebele rule in Zimbabwe and Basarwa and Wayeyi fleeing *bolata* also liked Chobe. In terms of religious activity, Chobe was the only place

in Botswana where Catholic missionaries settled in the nineteenth century. They maintained a mission at Mpandamatenga. During the twentieth century, the Chobe area did not attract many new inhabitants. The tsetse fly and malaria-causing mosquitoes made living there too difficult.

Source 7

Shua-Khoe in Chobe in 1906

Hunting in the Chobe region

Because Chobe was mostly open territory, it became a favoured hunting ground for the Batawana, Bakwena and Bangwato, who sent hunters there as early as the 1850s. Places like Mababe had huge game herds, which were utilised by hunters for over a century. An English trader named George Westbeech also established a big ivory trading operation at Mpandamatenga and operated independently of the various *dikgosi*. During the 1870s and 1880s, he bought ivory from various Zambians and Zimbabweans and then exported it south to Shoshong.

Westbeech and David Hume were the two biggest ivory traders in the nineteenth century. See Chapter 7 for more details.

Chobe became part of the Bechuanaland Protectorate in 1890, and the area was designated crown land. The British

were unable to maintain much presence in the area until 1908, when they stationed an officer at Kazungula. It was only after this that the collection of taxes and the introduction of British law arrived. From then on, it became illegal to hunt big game in the area.

Events after 1885

After the British government took over the Bechuanaland Protectorate, it placed the Kgalagadi and Chobe under its direct control. It did this because the land had never been under the permanent control of one of the large Batswana *merafe*. Except in the case of Ghanzi, this was true. Batswana had never ruled the peoples of the Kgalagadi desert, though they had often hunted or moved there in times of danger.

Such land was called crown land and is now called state land.

On crown land the British recognised local headmen, who had the right to judge cases among their subjects. Thus the Basubia and Bakgalagadi chiefs retained their authority at the local level. In Ghanzi, though, no local headmen were recognised and all people were subject to the laws of Great Britain.

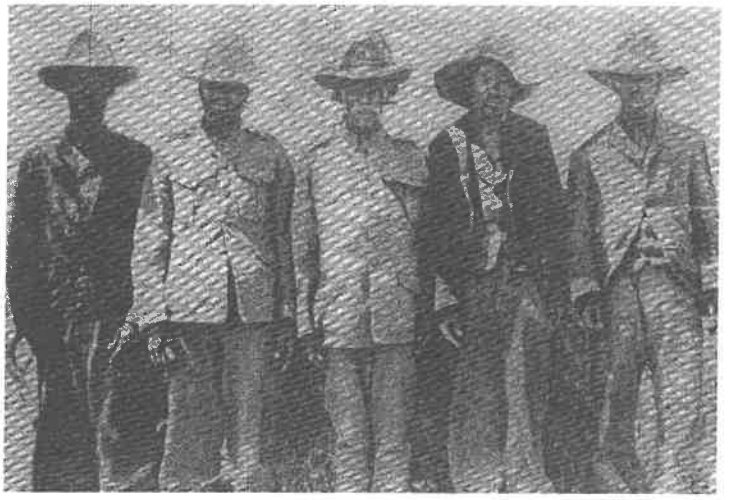
But the fact that such areas were under direct British control made little difference before 1910. No schools were built and few developments took place. Some half-hearted attempts were made to restrict hunting. Later on, though, much of the Kgalagadi would be turned into Game Reserves. The local population lost its right to use the areas they had long lived on. Contact with the government was limited to occasional visits by policemen on camels collecting taxes.

The British government did not oppose Africans settling on crown land. For instance, when Sekgoma Khama split with his father, Khama III, in the 1890s, he went into exile in the Nata

area, in the south of the Chobe district. Many Barolong fleeing white rule in South Africa also settled in the Kgalagadi desert. Perhaps the most spectacular new immigrants to the Kgalagadi were the Nama-Khoe of Simon Kopper. Kopper was in fact from Namibia. Between 1904 and 1908, he had engaged in armed struggle against the German colonists. He fought a guerrilla war, fighting a major battle at Sitachwe Pan, inside the Protectorate where the Gemsbok National Park lies today. Despite these successes, Kooper did not command enough strength to overcome the Germans and eventually settled in the Matsheng area in 1908.

Source 8

Simon Kopper (centre) with men



During the period after 1885, the Bakgalagadi living in the Matsheng and the Kweneng began to engage in a new kind of trading system. The Bakgalagadi had been long-distance traders for some time, but this mainly involved trading south into the Cape Province. After the Protectorate had been established, they began to move goods north from the Kweneng and Matsheng, selling them in the Ghanzi area and Ngamiland.

Many of these Bakgalagadi traders made clothes and blankets out of skins and they were thought to be the best in Botswana. They would make a large number of items and then perhaps go north, to either Kweneng or Ngamiland, with

other things like horses or iron goods. Then they would trade their skins and horses for cattle, which they would then trek down to Matsheng.

Not only did such trade bring in a lot of wealth to the Bakgalagadi, but it also led to large-scale migrations north into the areas they were trading in. Between 1880 and 1910 many Bakgalagadi left the Matsheng area, settling in Ghanzi and the south west part of Ngamiland. In these new areas they kept trading and seem to have been the most successful of all the *merafe* at business.

What have I learnt?

1. Discuss the similarities and differences between the economic activities of the Bangologa and the Naro-Khoe.
2. a) Who was Dukuri?
   b) What led to his downfall?
3. How did the Batawana control Ghanzi?
4. How did the Ghanzi end up in the hands of the white settlers?
5. What was crown land?
6. The Chobe area was not conquered by any large *morafe*. What was the result of this fact?

Chapter Sixteen

Changes in the north

A number of the main developments that occurred in the north between 1885 and 1910 have already been covered, for instance, the BSAC's attempts to take over territory by corrupting the government. Also, the north suffered badly from rinderpest, locust infestations and drought in the late 1890s. Famine was wide-spread. Still, many other things were going on, both politically and socially.

White settlement in the north

Apart from Ghanzi, whites also settled in the Tati and the Tuli Block after 1890. The Tati area had gold mines that were hundreds of years old. As was discussed in Chapter 6, Europeans discovered gold there in the 1860s in a section of land that was a neutral area between the Amandebele and Bangwato. Almost all the residents there were Bakalanga who paid tribute to *Inkosi* Lobengula of the Amandebele. Lobengula had awarded the area to some Englishmen who then formed the Tati Company. Before the 1890s, the company had a great many problems mining the area. Wars and uncertainty as to who owned the area also discouraged them.

In the 1890s Britain placed this land in the Bechuanaland Protectorate and not in Rhodesia. The Tati came under the control of the Tati Company, though the Protectorate government controlled policing and justice in the area. Big efforts were made to mine gold in the 1890s, but by 1900 it was clear no much gold was left.

Why do you think *dikgosi* granted concessions in their territories to white businessmen? Look back at previous chapters to add to your answer.

Since the mines did not produce much gold, the Tati Company found other ways to make money. It had a lot of land, some of which it sold or rented to white farmers. The rest was eventually used to house Africans looking for land to settle on. Some of

these groups were refugees from South Africa, such as some Barolong under *Kgosi* Moroka. The Company also tried to tax the Bakalanga.

In 1894, the Tati Company persuaded Rauwe, the *Kgosi* of the Bakhurutshe, to settle in the Tati area. His father, Sekoko, had lived in the Tati up until the 1860s, but then left for Shoshong as the Amandebele were taking too many of his young people from him. Rauwe signed an agreement with the Company to supply them with mine labourers and to collect land rentals from all the Africans living in Tati. These included the Bakalanga living under Habangana, Mosojane and Masunga.

Rauwe did not live up to his side of the agreement and in 1904 the Company tried to evict him and the Bakhurutshe. The government then stepped in to control the situation. It was suspicious of the Tati Company, which was trying to act independently and to impose its own laws and taxes in Tati. Eventually, in 1911, the government agreed to pay £1 000 a year rent for the Africans in the Tati area, while maintaining the right to rule them and collect hut tax.

Despite government intervention, the Bakhurutshe felt they lacked sufficient land and in 1913 moved into Bangwato territory, settling at Tonota. Tati continued to be over-populated, though, as a new influx of Africans arrived under Moroka. Meanwhile, other Batswana had moved to Francis-town looking for jobs.

The Tuli Block, another area of white settlement, is a small strip running along the Limpopo River. This land had been given away by Khama in 1895 to the British to build a railway. The government gave it to the BSAC.

After the Jameson Raid failed in 1896, the BSAC continued to claim the Tuli Block, although they never built a railway on it. Once the South African war was over, the BSAC marked off a number of farms and sold them to white farmers. Africans in the area, such as the Babirwa, then became subject to BSAC taxation. Like the Bakhurutshe in Francistown, most of the Babirwa left white territory and settled among the Bangwato rather than pay extra taxes.

White traders operating in Gammangwato, Ngamiland and Francistown ran most of the farms. These men would buy cattle from the African population and then graze them in Tuli. They sold off big animals, often smuggling them across the river into South Africa. Younger cattle were fattened and then sold off later. Growing crops, though, never proved successful due to poor soils and drought.

Events among the Bangwato

Source 1

Kgosi *Khama III of Bangwato*

Khama III was the favourite *kgosi* of the government. As long as he was content to support their plans, they were happy to let him control his district. The British allowed Khama, as they did all other Batswana *dikgosi*, to rule all the groups underneath him as he saw fit. Thus the Bakalanga, Batswapong, Khoe and Bakgalagadi and others continued to be under Bangwato domination.

Many of these groups were not happy about this arrangement. They disliked paying tribute to the Bangwato, providing men for regiments and following the orders of Khama's headmen. Meanwhile, their traditional leaders were often ignored.

Khama and the Baseleka

Khama did not tolerate any attempt by his subjects to assert their own authority. An example of this policy can be seen with the Baseleka, a small group living near the Limpopo River. In 1885 the Baseleka under *Kgosi* Kobe engaged in *bogwera*, allowed a Boer family to hunt in their territory and refused to take orders from Palapye. Khama sent a *mophato* to punish the Baseleka. This group of men burned down the Baseleka fields. But the Baseleka refused to back down and his made Khama angry.

The British government sent an official to try to persuade the Baseleka to give up. After this, the British told Khama to do

what he wanted with regard to the Baseleka: "The sole responsibility in the last resort rests not with us but with you," they wrote to him.

Khama responded by massing some 4 000 men. Accompanied by a group of British police, he attacked the Baseleka who were hiding out on the Ngwapa Hills. In the ensuing battle, eventually won by the Bangwato, eight attackers and thirteen defenders were killed. Following the bloodshed, most of the Baseleka fled to South Africa.

Khama and the Shua-Khoe

Another instance of Bangwato domination can be seen in Nata, where a large number of Shua-Khoe lived. Prior to the 1880s, such people had largely been involved in the hunting trade, which was coming to an end as the big game was shot out. But by this time, the Bangwato were rich in cattle and needed large numbers of herders to look after these animals.

Khama hoped Nata could be the site of his new cattleposts, as it was fairly well watered. He sent a number of regiments, under his son, Sekgoma, to put cattle under the control of Shua-Khoe herders. The people of Nata had no say in the matter. They were rounded up and apportioned to the new cattleposts. Those who resisted faced possible execution.

Thus a new way of life came to Nata.

Bangwato headmen controlled the area and cattle owners occasionally came to the area to oversee their cattleposts. Shua-Khoe herders were rarely paid, but were allowed to drink milk. They could not leave the area and were tracked down and punished if they did.

Bolata was against the law in the Bechuanaland Protectorate, as elsewhere in the British Empire. But the government made no attempt to stop it.

Do you think Khama was justified in his action against the Baseleka and Shua-Khoe? Give reasons for your answer?

Describe in a well-structured paragraph what the policy of the British government was towards the *dikgosi* in Botswana in the 1890s.

- In the first place, the government did not have many officers and lacked the money necessary to hire more.
- Secondly, the headmen and royal family members who ran the courts and collected taxes for the government owned most of the *malata*. The owners worked for the government who decided not to take their *malata* away.

Bangwato internal conflicts

Though Khama was an extremely strong and capable ruler, he never really succeeded in uniting his people. Various royal family members quarrelled with him and this led to splits within the Bangwato.

For instance, Khama fell out with his brother Raditladi, who showed independence of spirit in the *kgotla*. Raditladi and some of his supporters quarrelled with Khama over religious matters and denounced Khama's ban on the drinking of alcohol. Eventually in 1895, the government decided to let Raditladi and his supporters leave the Bangwato Reserve. This group moved into a large area inside the borders of what was then Rhodesia. Khama, however, ended his ban on alcohol before Raditladi left, denying the exiles much of their original support. Raditladi's faction remained in exile for some 20 years.

Not long after this split, Khama fell out with his firstborn son and heir, Sekgoma. The reasons for the split centred around the fact that Sekgoma wanted a significant role in advising his father about tribal affairs, but his father would not let him do much. Khama also did not approve of Sekgoma's extra-marital affairs.

Still another reason for the Khama-Sekgoma split was that Khama sent his people to live all over the Bangwato district after 1896. This was called his policy of decentralisation. Prior to this, the Bangwato had generally lived together in the capital, where the *kgosi* could oversee the affairs of his people closely.

Khama's plan of decentralisation

By the 1890s, Khama had acquired all sorts of new land: the Motloutse area from the Amandebele, the Boteti from the Batawana and the area around Lophepe from the Bakgatla and Bakwena. All this land was lying idle and so Khama began splitting up his *morafe* to occupy it. Khama sent the Bakaa and other Bakgalagadi to live at Shoshong, while the Babirwa went to Bobonong. Other settlers went up to the Boteti River. Meanwhile, most of the Bangwato remained behind in the capital, which in 1902 was moved to Serowe. In fact, Khama had abandoned Shoshong in 1889 when the water there ran out. By the late 1890s, Palapye was also running dry and so Khama moved to Serowe. Due to the fact that the Bangwato were by this time more spread out than before, the population was small enough for Serowe to support.

To supervise these new settlements, Bangwato headmen were sent out to new villages like Mmadinare, Bobonong and Sefhope. Rauwe of the Bakhurutshe was headman at Tonota. Nswazwi, a minor Nkalanga chief, was sent from Shoshong to Sebina to rule the Bakalanga even though he had no traditional authority over those people. In these new areas, large numbers of schools and LMS churches were opened and white traders and policemen also operated there. Khama was successful in moving his people to cover a wide area and, as a result, the Central District today has a widely distributed population.

Khama's plan of decentralisation angered Sekgoma because he was the heir and felt his future position was being weakened. Sekgoma, after some years of bitter relations, was eventually asked by his father to leave. He went with some 2 000 followers to Lophephe in 1899. Then in 1907, he moved to Nekati on crown land north of Nata. Only many years later, did he return to Serowe.

1. Explain how Khama's political policies led to the break with his son.

2. Role-play the final discussion between the two, when Khama asked Sekgoma to leave.

Sekgoma Letsholathebe's rule in Ngamiland

Though Ngamiland became part of the Protectorate in 1890, not one British government official settled there until 1894. In those four years there was practically no contact between the government and the Batawana.

This changed when *Kgosi* Sekgoma of Batawana led a spectacular military expedition into Angola in 1893.

Sekgoma, as was seen in Chapter 9, had assumed power as regent in 1891. He is not to be confused with Sekgoma, the son of Khama of Bangwato.

Sekgoma was extremely ambitious and was always looking for ways to increase his political support. He decided to go on a military campaign to gain cattle and *malata* to distribute among potential followers.

In 1893 he took a large expedition up the Okavango River up into the Caprivi Strip and Angola. There he captured thousands of cattle and took many *malata* in battle. On his way back, he stopped off to greet an old Batawana ally, Nyangana, *kgosi* of the Bagcereku, a large Hambukushu group.

Sekgoma and the Bagcereku

Showing Nyangana his large number of cattle, Sekgoma explained that his success was due to the medicine that he put on his guns. Nyangana was eager to learn the secret of

Sekgoma's medicine and so agreed to meet Sekgoma the next day.

Sekgoma said he would apply medicine to all the Bagcereku guns. On the following day, Nyangana and his warriors went to a place in the bush, where Sekgoma and his *dingaka* put all the Bagcereku guns in a big pile.

An elaborate ceremony was begun and after some time Nyangana was asked to crawl through a large noose as part of the treatment. As soon as the Bagcereku *kgosi* was inside the noose, Sekgoma had it tighten around him. A large force of Batawana soldiers then emerged and killed the defenceless Bagcereku warriors.

This episode, known as the Battle of Lishora, succeeded beyond Sekgoma's wildest dreams. He wiped out almost all the adult Bagcereku men with very few losses on his own side, and took large numbers of cattle and guns. Sekgoma's men then went to Nyangana's capital and took hundreds of young women and children as *malata*. On his return to Ngamiland, Sekgoma divided up the cattle and *malata* amongst his warriors. In this way, he built up a large following of men who were indebted to him.

Write a newspaper article, reporting on the Battle of Lishora.

How to write a newspaper article:

1. Research and plan your article as you would an essay, using a diagram.
2. Decide what your approach will be towards the article. Are you going to be as objective as possible? Or do you want to support or criticise one of the groups involved? Many people expect a news report to be unbiased, but this is often not the case.

3. Your main idea, together with your approach, will form the headline. The headline should always catch the readers' eye and make them want to read more.
4. The first paragraph should begin with the main idea and then outline the rest of the piece. A good newspaper article always begins by setting out the Why? Where? When? and How? of the events being reported.
5. The paragraphs of newspaper articles are usually very short and concise.
6. Newspaper reports often include eyewitness accounts, in the form of quotes.
7. Decide if you will also include a photograph and a caption.

1. For what reason did Sekgoma Letsholathebe attack the Bagcereku?

2. How was this attack different from Khama's attack on the Baseleka?

3. Do you think that Sekgoma was justified in what he did?

When the British government heard about Sekgoma's actions, it was outraged. It did not want any friction to develop with the German and Portuguese governments, on whose territory the raids had occurred. So the British sent policemen to Ngamiland to ensure that Sekgoma made no more military expeditions.

The natural disasters of the mid-1890s

Look back at Chapter 14 for more detail of this period of disasters.

Ngamiland, like the rest of Botswana, suffered badly from the natural disasters that occurred in the mid-1890s. Severe droughts hit the area from 1895 to 1897 and huge locust swarms covered the area throughout the 1890s. After the droughts began, these locust invasions ate up much of the crops and the grazing for cattle.

Rinderpest arrived in Ngamiland in late 1896 and destroyed cattle and game in huge numbers. But in Ngamiland, rinderpest did not kill nearly as many cattle as in southern Botswana. Many areas of the region, especially in the drier parts of the west, were not affected. Most cattle owners were left with several animals after the epidemic passed through.

These natural calamities forced the population of Ngamiland to relocate. Prior to the 1890s, most people lived in the south east around Lake Ngami. However, in 1896 the lake dried up and the water levels in the area sank further underground. As a result, many people moved north up to the edges of the Okavango Delta. This was an area where previously few people had lived due to the prevalence of tsetse fly. However, when rinderpest killed off huge numbers of cattle and wild game, the tsetse fly (which spreads sleeping sickness to cattle and people) was greatly reduced in the Okavango Delta as it had nothing to feed on. Sekgoma Letsholathebe moved his capital to Tsau, on the edge of the swamps.

The British West Charterland Company

In the 1890s, Ngamiland was the site of one of the largest business ventures ever to have taken place in the Bechuanaland Protectorate. British businessmen raised £400 000 and acquired the concession signed by Nicholls and Hicks in 1888.

See Chapter 8 for more background.

These men were confident that they would find large quantities of gold and diamonds in Ngamiland and Ghanzi and were prepared to establish a British colony in the area if they succeeded. This company, known as British West Charterland (BWC), had exactly the same aims at the BSAC.

Can you remember what the aims of the BSAC were?

But because it was not influential with the government, the BWC had to rely on Sekgoma Letsholathebe for support. Sekgoma and the BWC ended up collaborating against the government in order to prevent the loss of Batawana land in Ghanzi and Boteti. Despite the huge amount of money spent, the BWC did not find any minerals in Ngamiland. The company thought that the only place where diamonds could be found was the Boteti River area where the modern Orapa and Letlakane mines are located. But, as the British government had awarded the region to Khama, they could not prospect there. As a result, diamonds were not discovered commercially in Botswana until after independence.

The arrival of the Ovaherero

In 1904, a new group of people made their appearance in Botswana, the Ovaherero. In fact, the Ovaherero are made up of two groups, one called the Mbanderu and the other the Herero. They speak the same Tjiherero language and have similar lifestyles, but they have separate leaders and tend not to intermarry.

When the Germans took over Namibia in the 1890s, they came into conflict with both the Herero and Mbanderu because these people were unwilling to take orders from the Germans. Many Mbanderu moved to Ngamiland in 1897 to escape German domination. Initially, the Herero collaborated with the Germans and helped them militarily. But in 1903, the Herero fell out with the Germans because Samuel Maharero, their leader, refused to let his people live in small reserves. Then the Herero and the Mbanderu launched a surprise revolt. At this point, the Germans told all Ovaherero to leave Namibia or be exterminated.

Can you think of any modern examples of genocide?

WORDS

Genocide is what is committed when one group tries to exterminate another, such as the Germans did to the Herero in Namibia. Between 1905 and 1907, it is estimated that up to 70% of all Ovaherero perished.

Despite brave Ovaherero fighting, the German military eventually proved too strong and ruthless. Ovaherero died in extremely large numbers. By 1905, thousands had fled the fighting and sought safety with Sekgoma Letsholathebe in Ngamiland. Some Mbanderu went to the Chobe area in later years, but eventually they returned to Ngamiland, setting around Lake Ngami. The Herero stayed in Ngamiland and Boteti for some years and in the 1920s many ended up in Mahalapye.

When the Ovaherero arrived in Botswana, they were very poor and had no cattle. To survive, they grew crops even though they preferred just to raise cattle. Many of them also acquired *mafisa* from the richer Batswana, often borrowing these cattle for decades at a time. In this way, they managed to restore their prosperity after the disasters in Namibia.

Features of northern Botswana's society

Sekgoma Letsholathebe was removed from the Batawana **bogosi** in 1905 by the British. He was replaced by Mathiba II, who ruled for the next 28 years. Meanwhile, Khama III continued as Bangwato **kgosi** until 1923.

By 1920, the similarity between Ngamiland and Gammangwato was great. In both areas, small Batswana minorities controlled large areas of land populated by non-Tswana majorities. The same mechanisms of control were used. Large areas of land were divided and put under the control of *basimane ba kgosi*, who were almost always Batswana.

When hunting no longer produced wealth, both the Bangwato and Batawana relied on cattle for their livelihood. By 1910, cattle herds had been restored from the devastation caused by rinderpest. These animals were kept in areas far from the capitals. They were often herded by *malata* or by poorer people who borrowed them as *mafisa*. In general, the Batswana controlled the majority of cattle owned. Their subject populations, the Wayeyi, Bakalanga and others, relied more on agriculture as a livelihood.

Along with the rise in Batswana political power came the influence of Batswana culture. Setswana began to replace other languages and was used in public forums such as the *kgotla*, school and church. The use of Batswana law and custom forced the subject peoples to abandon of their own customs and act more like Batswana.

But the culture brought by the Batswana was not really the same culture that the Batswana had practised in the 18th century. Khama himself changed many of the laws as he was a Christian. When Mathiba took power in Ngamiland, Khama also impressed upon him the need to adopt new laws in order to get rid of the influence of non-Christians like Sekgoma Letsholathebe.

One of the biggest changes made in the north was the abolition of *bogadi*, in which the family of a man was expected to pay cattle to his wife's family. The end of *bogadi* meant that younger men did not have to struggle to earn cattle to get married. The abolition of *bogadi* also meant that fewer men in northern Botswana engaged in migrant labour, at least in comparison with southern Botswana. However, *bogadi* continued to be practised in southern Botswana, and in the rest of southern Africa. In fact, the cost of *bogadi* tended to increase after 1900. This made it hard for men to get married. They were often forced to go to work on the mines for several years in order to earn enough cattle.

There were other reasons why there were fewer migrants from the north of Botswana. *Malata* were not allowed by their masters to move freely. The owners relied on their *malata* to produce money and products for them with which they could

pay their taxes. Very few women migrated from northern Botswana, which also differs from southern areas. This is partly because the north is further away from South Africa. But also, in the north there was much more land than in the south so there was no pressure to force women into work. Those who wanted money or livestock could often obtain it by growing tobacco, which always had a ready market. Finally, the government allowed many residents of the north to pay taxes with goods such as sorghum, maize or skins, rather than with money only. In southern Botswana the government demanded money from all men, and so many were forced to get a job in South Africa to pay their taxes. In the north many men could simply plough an extra field or hunt a few animals to pay their taxes.

What have I learnt?

1. a) Where did whites settle in Botswana?
   b) Why did they go to those places?
2. Did the British interfere in the affairs of Khama and Sekgoma Letsholathebe? Explain your answer.
3. Why did Khama and his son, Sekgoma, quarrel?
4. What was the BWC?
5. Why did the Ovaherero move to Ngamiland?
6. How did Tswana culture spread in the north of Botswana? Comment on the link between political and cultural domination.

Chapter Seventeen

Realities of "protection" in the Bechuanaland Protectorate

Introduction

Between 1906 and 1910, two developments occurred that showed how politics in the Bechuanaland Protectorate would be run in the future.

First, *Kgosi* Sekgoma Letsholathebe of the Batawana fought a crucial court case against the government. The British government won this case. Its officials in the Protectorate were confirmed in their legal right to take any action they wanted. They were under no obligation to respect the wishes of Batswana or to respect the laws of Great Britain.

Second, in 1908 the British government began to press to transfer the Bechuanaland Protectorate to the control of the South African government. It wanted to save money and also to put blacks under the control of whites (which it believed was the best set up). Batswana leaders joined together to oppose this transfer to South Africa.

For the first time, the idea arose that the peoples of Bechuanaland were a nation and that they could not be located within another country.

Strangely enough, the Batswana leaders who opposed the transfer of the Protectorate to South Africa used an idea taken from the British themselves. Before this period, the British claimed to be protecting the Batswana, rather than stating the selfish reasons for which they had taken the country. By 1910, the Batswana began to say that the British wanted to hand

them over to the very same people that they had originally been protected from. The Batswana leaders appealed to the British public not to betray them and then hoped the British public would place pressure on its politicians not to give up the protected Batswana to the South African government.

The legal basis of British power in the Bechuanaland Protectorate

As we saw in Chapter 12, Great Britain took over the area it called the Bechuanaland Protectorate in 1885 under a British law called the Foreign Jurisdiction Act.

The Foreign Jurisdiction Act allowed Britain to interfere in the government of other countries to protect the interests of its citizens. At first this act was interpreted to mean that Britain had a right to control the affairs of the British and other white people living in the Protectorate. Batswana would remain under the authority of their *dikgosi*. As a result, Batswana were not entitled to the legal protection of British courts.

However, in 1891 the British decided to increase their powers over Batswana by declaring that their *dikgosi* were too uncivilised to rule without the guidance of colonial officials. The British officials wanted to reduce the power of *dikgosi* who opposed the vast ambitions of Cecil Rhodes. Officials found that they did not have a legal right to hand Botswana over to Rhodes.

In 1891, the High Commissioner issued an Order-in-Council that gave the Protectorate administration unlimited powers over the Batswana. At the same time, Batswana could still be denied access to British law. Thereafter a Motswana simply had no way to protect himself legally from the abuses of the government.

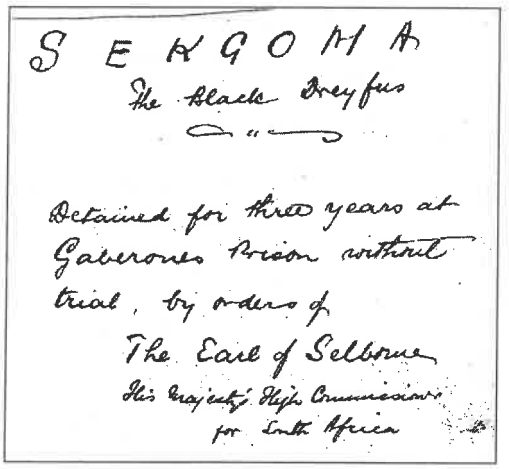
In Britain, citizens had many legal protections to fall back upon in case the government mistreated them. One of these protections was known as *habeus corpus*, which said that no individual could be put into prison without being charged for breaking a law. A citizen had to be charged with a crime and given a trial. Batswana were not allowed such forms of protection.

The Sekgoma Letsholathebe Case

As we have seen, Sekgoma Letsholathebe was the **kgosi** of the Batawana.

It was *Kgosi* Sekgoma who actually took the question of British power in Protectorates before the courts. He felt that the way he had been treated was illegal under British law. He was the first *kgosi* to challenge British laws. Unfortunately, he failed to win his case. This meant that government officials in Africa were given unlimited power over him and other Africans who lived in British Protectorates,

Source 1



Sol Plaatje, a famous South African writer, reported on Sekgoma's trial at the time. Find out what he means by "the black Dreyfus" and relate it to Sekgoma's trial and imprisonment.

The events leading to Sekgoma's imprisonment

Sekgoma was not the legitimate *kgosi* of the Batawana. He had taken power in 1891 when his nephew, Mathiba, was three years old. Sekgoma tried to create a large group of supporters who would help him claim the *bogosi*. He loaned out many cattle and gained many friends. He also took cattle away from some rich men and gave them to poorer people.

Because Sekgoma was not the real leader, he was always opposed by a large group who supported Mathiba. Most of these men were from the royal family and had wealth and supporters of their own. These *dikgosana* refused to accept Sekgoma's leadership and called for Mathiba to be *kgosi* when he became an adult.

By 1905, Mathiba was seventeen. Calls increased for his return from Cape Town, where he was at school. Sekgoma made a crucial mistake at the end of this year, when he divorced his wife (who was the daughter of Khama's brother). He became angry when his wife failed to have children. In late 1905 Sekgoma went to the Francistown court where he succeeded in getting a divorce. During the hearing, Sekgoma's friends told a number of lies in order to win the case. They claimed that his wife had been having an affair with Wetshootsile, the son of the former regent, Dithapo. Sekgoma's move backfired because Dithapo was Sekgoma's most important supporter. Dithapo became angry and began supporting Mathiba. Meanwhile, Sekgoma had gone to South Africa to see a doctor and do some shopping.

Dithapo, Wetshootsile and other *dikgosana* sent a letter to Cape Town telling Mathiba to come back to become *kgosi*. Mathiba was soon on the train heading back to Ngamiland. They also sent letters to Khama, asking him to convince the government that Sekgoma was not the real *kgosi*. Sekgoma heard about the conspiracy. He also got on the train in order to get home quickly. The British government got involved because it did not want fighting to break out between the supporters of the two men.

Sekgoma and Mathiba were both stopped in southern Bechuanaland and placed under close observation. The government sent a delegation to investigate who should be *Kgosi* of the Batawana. In 1906 the Resident Commissioner went to Ngamiland. After consulting the Batawana, he declared Mathiba chief. Mathiba, he said, was the legitimate *kgosi* by birth and had the support of the majority. Despite his claims of impartiality, the Resident Commissioner knew that Sekgoma was more popular. Khama and he had decided in advance that Mathiba should be the chief. The Resident Commissioner knew that Mathiba was an educated Christian under the influence of Khama. Mathiba would do what the government wanted. Sekgoma, on the other hand, was strong and independent and was not attracted to western culture.

Sekgoma is imprisoned

Mathiba was installed as *kgosi* in late 1906. The Resident Commissioner kept Sekgoma in prison. He claimed that if Sekgoma was set free, he would return to Ngamiland and start a war. Keeping a person in jail in such a manner was illegal in Britain because a person could only be arrested after a crime was committed. But Sekgoma was detained because the government felt he might do something wrong.

Sekgoma was left languishing in the Gaborone prison for many years, during which time he kept asking to know what he had done. The government could not move him out of the country, because then Sekgoma would come under British law and be released. Nor did they want to let him go free inside the Protectorate, as they feared a possible war.

The Sekgoma case goes to the courts

But Sekgoma refused to be defeated by the British and he had some faith in British law. He and other Batawana had been to court many times before to collect money owed to them by white traders. Sekgoma had also won his divorce case in a British court. Moreover, his friend, Charles Riley, a Coloured trader, urged Sekgoma to take his case to London and demand *habeus corpus*.

In 1909, after failing to obtain *habeus corpus* in the Cape, Sekgoma sent Riley and two other friends to London. There they hired a British lawyer to fight the case in front of the highest courts. Sekgoma lost. The courts ruled that he was in fact a foreign subject and thus not entitled to the legal protection of *habeus corpus*. Furthermore, the court noted, British law could not be extended to the Protectorates. The British judges were uncomfortable denying people under British rule the rights every Englishman enjoyed. But, they noted, their misgivings were:

Source 2

made less difficult if one remembers that the Protectorate is a country in which a few dominant civilized men have to control a great multitude of the semi barbarous.

And so Sekgoma, who owned a typewriter, shot with modern guns and was married and divorced according to British law, was denied basic human rights due to his "semi barbarous" nature. Likewise, all the inhabitants of the Bechuanaland Protectorate were classified as uncivilised and were thus seen as unfit to have any legal protection.

Comment on the bias in Source 2.

Sekgoma was eventually allowed to go to Chobe in 1912, where the majority of Ngamiland's population joined him. He died there in 1914 and his followers quickly drifted back to Ngamiland.

The threat of the Union of South Africa

The Batswana had narrowly avoided becoming part of the BSAC's colony of Rhodesia in the 1890s. After 1907 they again were nearly incorporated into another country.

After the South African War of 1899 to 1902, the British betrayed the Africans who had helped them defeat the Boers.

The British wanted to create a new nation called the Union of South Africa. This new country, which they called the Union, was to include the former Boer republics of the Orange Free State and the SAR as well as the British colonies of the Cape and Natal. Also to be included were the three Protectorates - Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland. The Africans of the Protectorates and the Union were not to be given equal rights. British politicians felt that the new Union would only be strong if the defeated Boers of the SAR and Free State were happy. So in 1906 the British rulers gave the citizens of the SAR and Orange Free State (mostly Boers) the right to elect their own governments and make their own laws.

The Batswana were quick to challenge their incorporation into the proposed Union of South Africa. The Batswana leaders knew that if they continued to live under the British flag as a Protectorate, then at least they would control their own lives in some measure due to the nature of indirect rule.

Batswana petition the British government

Peter Sidzumo, Sebele's South African secretary, led the Batswana challenge. In May 1908 he drafted a Bakwena petition opposing incorporation. Then he began building up a united front among the Batswana. He told the Bakgatla that if the Batswana did not join together in protest against the Union, they "would be killed by their quietness". To the Bangwato, Sidzumo explained the importance of decisive action. "The native question," he noted, "is the only present obstacle towards the closer union of various South African governments." Batswana needed to act fast before "the native question" was solved by the South African whites. Meanwhile, Sidzumo warned Bangwaketse *Kgosi* Bathoen I against incorporation, saying:

Source 3

"We have found that the white settlers do not like the black people, neither do they appreciate to see them own land, the wealth of which was given to us by God. They only desire to see destruction, hatred, war and poverty for black people."

Educated spokesmen such as Sidzumo also began to co-operate with the Basotho and Amaswati in making their position known to the South African and British public. At the same time, they became associated with the rise of black protest politics in South Africa. In that country, black-controlled newspapers and political associations had arisen to challenge white settler domination.

The Basotho, in particular, became important allies of the Batswana. This worried the British, because they feared that the Basotho were more radical in their hatred of the British than the Batswana. According to High Commissioner Selborne:

Source 4

"While unrest in Basutoland was not likely to precipitate that "general native rising" which to some minds is the object of constant apprehension . . . their present form of government constituted a certain barrier between the Basotho and surrounding tribes . . . (and) any change of government which both weakened that barrier and was resented by the Basotho might tempt them to make common cause with other tribes."

Soon after he made that statement, Selborne received petitions against incorporation from Sebele and Bathoen. He had to take their objections seriously. Like the Basotho, the Batswana had not been disarmed. Not long after, he received another petition from Queen Regent Labotsibeni of Swaziland. But Selborne still believed in incorporating the three protectorates. He even drafted a set of rules whereby the British colonial office would oversee the territories once they had been transferred.

Selborne's new set of protections angered white South African politicians who wanted a free hand over Africans. Their objections helped the Batswana, Basotho and Amaswati because incorporation was delayed. Everyone had to wait until the British Parliament could vote on the legislation that formed the new Union of South Africa.

During this new period of indecision, the Batswana worked hard to mobilise public opinion for their cause. Bathoen, Linchwe, Sebele and Kgosi Baitlole of the Balete all presented new anti-incorporation petitions to Selborne in January 1909. These petitions were sent to England the next month, just as a Basotho delegation arrived in London to make similar protests.

Source 5

Dikgosi Bathoen and Sebele speaking against the Union of South Africa at a 1909 Gaborone meeting

The formation of the People's Delegation

During February 1909, Bathoen and Sebele, along with the Basotho King Letsie, became founding members of the Coloured and Native People's Delegation. This group aimed to keep the Protectorate out of the Union and to win the vote for South African blacks. The People's Delegation was the first major multi-racial political grouping in southern Africa. Its members included Walter Rabusana, Daniel Dwanya and Thomas Mapikela of the South African Native Convention; John Tengo Jabavu of the Cape Native Convention; Pixley Ka Isaka Seme and Alfred Magena of the Transvaal Native Congress; Abdul Abdurahman, Richard Msimgang and DJ Lenders of the (mostly Coloured) African Peoples Organisation; Mohatma Gandhi of the Transvaal Indian Congress; as well as the Zulu leader, John Dube. It also had two white

members, the liberal former Cape Colony Prime Minister, W.P. Schreiner, and Joseph Gerrans, who was sent by Bathoen and Sebele to represent the *dikgosi* and people of Botswana.

The delegation left South Africa and arrived in London in July 1909. It tried to counteract the influence of a nineteen-member official South African delegation that sought to promote white rule in the new Union as well as incorporation. The British government feared the military strength of the Basotho so it listened to what the Basotho had to say, fearing an expensive war if it ignored African input.

Bathoen and Sebele appeal to the British public

What the Basotho and Batswana needed to do was to get their message before the British public. They hoped ordinary citizens could pressure the government to stop incorporation. Gerrans succeeded in getting Britain's most influential newspaper, *The Times*, to publish a long report in which Bathoen and Sebele gave their views on incorporation.

Because Bathoen and Sebele had been in Britain in 1895, they were fairly well known names. Thus their newspaper article generated a lot of favourable publicity. Bathoen and Sebele presented themselves as *dikgosi* who were loyal to the King and to the British Empire, from which they were being forcibly removed. They also used the old British idea of protection and turned it around to their own advantage. The *dikgosi* claimed that they had welcomed the British for protection from the Boers in 1885. Now they were being betrayed and being given away to the new Union of South Africa. Said Sebele:

Source 6

I am under the King - King Edward . . . We are thankful for the protection we enjoy today. To be handed over - no . . . When a man is born under one Government how can he be happy under another? If we go, we go simply as a result of compulsion; but our hearts we leave behind.

Bathoen spoke of the special bond that existed between Britain and Botswana, which had been created when he, Sebele and Khama met the Queen in 1895:

Source 7

A ring is the sign of an indissoluble bond. This ring was given to me by the late Queen Victoria . . . as a proof that the promises made would never be broken and that the Bangwaketse would for ever remain under the protection of Her Majesty.

As a result of this emotional appeal, a number of British MPs took up the Protectorate's cause. They opposed any vote for incorporation. So successful was the newspaper article that the British government soon promised that "the wishes of the natives in the territories will be most carefully considered before any transfer takes place."

The Union of South Africa

In late 1909, the British Parliament approved the Union of South African Act, which denied Africans the right to vote. The Batswana, Basotho and Amaswati, though, avoided incorporation. Bathoen and Sebele were partly responsible. The People's Delegation from South Africa had no success, on the other hand, in getting blacks the vote. Many of its members were seen as being against the British Empire, unlike Bathoen and Sebele who praised it.

On 31 May 1910, the new Union of South Africa came into existence. Though the three Protectorates had not been included in the Union initially, the threat of incorporation remained. In fact, Botswana struggled to remain out of the Union for many more decades, until it gained its own independence in 1966.

The formation of the African National Congress

Two years after the Union was formed, some 60 delegates gathered in Bloemfontein to start a new regional all-African organisation. Conference organiser, Pixley Seme, stressed that the new party should serve as a united voice, not only for black South Africans, but also for Africans in the Protectorates. He concluded by moving that the delegates and representatives of the great native houses from every part of South Africa here assembled should form and establish the South African Native National Congress. A number of delegates then seconded this motion, including Mokgalagadi Moisakgomo, representing *Kgosi* Seepapitso II of the Bangwaketse. All the delegates voted to form the new party, which was later renamed the African National Congress (ANC) in 1923.

The move to form the ANC had begun much earlier than in 1912. It was the product of many years of organising. Many Batswana, including Bathoen, Sebele and Segale Pilane, had been active in supporting the growth of regional African politics. Both Sebele and Bathoen, unfortunately, died just before the Bloemfontein meeting and never saw their dreams realised. However, the conference recognised the efforts of the Batswana by making Khama, Linchwe and *Kogsi* Lekoko of the Barolong honorary vice presidents. Khama rejected his appointment. Perhaps he feared that such an alliance would draw the Bangwato closer to the affairs of the Union, which he did not want to join. Linchwe followed Khama's example.

But Linchwe continued to be linked to the ANC for a long time. His brother, *Kgari* Pilane, served as the ANC treasurer. Meanwhile, Peter Sidzumo's brother, Richard (also Bakwena Tribal Secretary), became the Secretary General of the Bechuanaland and Griqualand West Section. For this reason, he was later expelled from Botswana by the British. Large numbers of Batswana belonged to Sidzumo's section, while Batswana working elsewhere in the Union joined other branches.

Batswana ties with the ANC remained strong until 1924, when the Congress went into temporary decline. The *dikgosi* even tried to adopt the ANC constitution when the British allowed them to form their own official body, the Native Advisory Council. Until independence, Batswana *dikgosi* used *Nkosi Sikelela Afrika* as their own national anthem on formal occasions.

Conclusion

By 1910, the date that is the cut-off for this book, politics in Botswana had moved a long way. No longer were *dikgosi* just ruling their own people according to traditional law and custom. Instead Batswana were involved in national and regional issues of a kind that had never existed in the nineteenth century. Batswana political leaders were looking to form their own alliances and to make their own decisions.

Bathoen died in 1910 and Sebele in 1911. Their passing marked the end of a proud era in Botswana's history. Before they died, each had educated successors who would continue their policies. Moreover, this new generation was ready to face the challenge that British rule posed to the dignity of the Batswana nation.

What have I learnt?

1. What were the parts of the Foreign Jurisdiction Act that the Orders-in-Council sought to replace?
2. What is *habeus corpus*?
3. For what reasons did British courts deny Sekgoma his release from prison?
4. Why did the British want the protectorates to be part of the Union of South Africa?
5. a) Why did Batswana *dikgosi* oppose incorporation into the union?
   b) What tactics did they use?
6. What was the Batswana role in the formation of the ANC?

19th - early 20th century traditional rulers

NB. Most dates before 1840 are approximations based on oral and a few documentary sources. * indicates regents (*motshwareledi*)

Bakgatla ba-ga-Kgafela

1. Pheto II (1795 - 1810)
2. Senwela (1810 - 1815)*
3. Letsebe (1851 - 1821)
4. Motlotle (1821 - 1825)*
5. Pilane (1825 - 1849)
6. Kgamanyane (1848 - 1874)
7. Bogatsu (1874 - 1876)*
8. Linchwe I (1876- 1923)

Bakgatla ba-ga-Mmanaana

1. Kalaota
2. Kontle (1820 - 1835)
3. Pheko (1835 - 1840)
4. Mosielele (1840 - 1871)*
5. Pilane (1871 - 1889)
6. Gobuamang (1889 - 1897)*
7. Baitirile (1897 - 1899)
8. Gobuamang (1899 -1912)* (ruled as *kgosi* 1918 - 1940)

Bakwena (ba-ga-Kgabo)

1. Kgabo (broke away from Bakwena ba-ga-Mogopa)
2. Motshudi
3. Motswasele I (1770 - 1785)
4. Seitlhamo (1785 - 1795)
5. Legwale (1795 - 1803)
6. Maleke (1803 - 1805)*
7. Tshosa (1805 - 1807)*

8. Motswasele II (1807 -1821)
9. Segokotlo (1821 - 1829)*
10. Molese (1829 - 1833)*
11. Sechele I (1833 -1892)
12. Sebele I (1892 - 1911)

Balete

1. Powe I (1805 - 1830)
2. Mokgosi I (1830 - 1886)
3. Ikaneng (1886 - 1896)
4. Mokgosi II (1896 - 1906)
5. Baitlotle (1906 - 1917)*

Bangwaketse

1. Mongala (broke away from Bakwena)
2. Moleta (1770 - 1790)
3. Makaba II (1790 - 1825)
4a. Sebego (1825 - 1844)* Senthufe (1844 - 1857)*
4b. Segotshane (1830 - 1853)*
5. Gaseitsiwe (1853 - 1889)
6. Bathoen I (1899 - 1910)

Bangwato

1. Mathiba (1780 - 1795) (broke away from Bakwena)
2. Khama I (1795 - 1817)
3. Kgari (1817 - 1828)
4. Sedimo (1828 - 1832)*
5. Khama II (1832 - 1834)
6. Bobjale (1834- 1835)*
7. Sekgoma I (1835 - 1857)
8. Matsheng (1857 - 1858)
9. Sekgoma I (1858 - 1866)
10. Matsheng (1866 - 1872)
11. Khama III (1872 - 1873)
12. Sekgoma I (1873 - 1875)
13. Khama III (1875 - 1923)

Baralong boo-Ratshidi

1. Leshomo (1790 - 1815)*
2. Tawana (1815 - 1849)
3. Montshiwa (1849 - 1896)
4. Besele (1896 - 1903)
5. Badirile (1903 - 1911)*

Batawana

1. Tawana (1795 - 1820) (son of Mathiba of Bangwato)
2. Moremi I (1820 - 1828)
3. Sedumedi (1828 - 1830)*
4. Mogalakwe (1830 - 1847)*
5. Letsholathebe (1847 - 1874)
6. Memo (1875 - 1877)*
7. Moremi II (1877 - 1890)
8. Dithapo (1890 - 1891)*
9. Sekgoma (1891 - 1905)*
10. Mathiba (1906 - 1933)

Batlokwa

1. Bogatsu (1795 - 1815)
2. Kgosi I (1815 - 1823)
3. Leshage (1823 - 1826)*
4. Bashe (1826 - 1835)*
5. Matlapeng (1835 - 1880)
6. Gaborone (1880 - 1931)

Bakalanga

1. Chibundule rulers (1450 - 1680), also known as the Torwa
2. Nichasike rulers (1680 - 1840), also known as the Rozwi or Changamire:
    a. Chilisamhulu (1820 - 1840)
    b. Chigadzike (1840 - 1842)

3. Khumalo (Amandebele) rulers (1840 - 1893)
    a. Mzilikazi (1840 - 1868)
    b. Umnombate (1868 - 1870)*
    c. Lobengula (1870 - 1893)

Bekuhane (Basubiya)

1. Itenge - legendary first Munitenge or chief
2. Ikuhane - son of Itenge, settled along the Chobe
3. Lilundu-Lituu
4. Mwale
5. Shanjo
6. Mafwila
7. Nsundano
8. Nonkwena or Liswani II (1845 - 1876) last ruler of united Bekuhane, fled to Rakops where he died.

List of suggested further reading

This book has drawn upon a wide range of archival and otherwise unpublished, as well as published, sources on the nineteenth century history of Botswana. A guide to most of these sources can be found in Barry Morton's *Pre-Colonial Botswana, An Annotated Bibliography and Guide to the Sources* (Gaborone, Botswana Society, 1994). Many articles have also been locally published by the Botswana Society in its annual *Botswana Notes and Records*. The following is a select bibliography of additional books on the period that may be of interest to the general reader.

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A sister text to the critically acclaimed *Birth of Botswana, A history of the Bechuanaland Protectorate (1910-1966)*

This newly revised volume provides the first comprehensive account of Botswana's nineteenth century roots. Based on the latest findings and original research, the book chronicles the political, social and economic changes affecting various communities, which were incorporated into the Bechuanaland Protectorate.

Beginning with an introduction to the nature of History and the kinds of sources used, this new edition goes on to look briefly at Southern African communities before 1800. It then continues with a re-examination of the period of the Bakololo and Amandebele invasions (1823-44) and traces the process by which Batswana rulers were able to build up their own authority and resist outside incursions through their participation in the trade of guns for game products. A full account of the 1852-53 Batswana victory over the Transvaal Boers is included. Other chapters examine such issues as Christian evangelisation, education, shifting patterns of indigenous servitude and the subjugation by Batswana of non-Batswana speaking communities, such as Khoisan speakers, Wayeyi and Bakgalagari.

In its chapter on the coming and consolidation of British rule, the myth of Batswana acquiesence to the British Protectorate is rejected. The chapter also shows that there was imperial intervention into Batswana affairs before 1910. The final chapter traces the beginning of a separate territorial consciousness, beginning with the early campaigns to keep the Protectorate free of the rule of neighbouring settler colonies.

Building a Nation has been revised to offer a learner-centred, activity-based approach which builds on students' own experiences. Each chapter develops a historical skill, including working with case studies, historical photographs and how to plan and write an academic essay. The text now offers a wide variety of activities, ranging from summaries and role-plays to map work, poetry and research projects. This will guarantee active participation for all and the creation of a rich and diverse learning environment.There is also a full index and words are glossed throughout, both making for a highly learner-friendly text.

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